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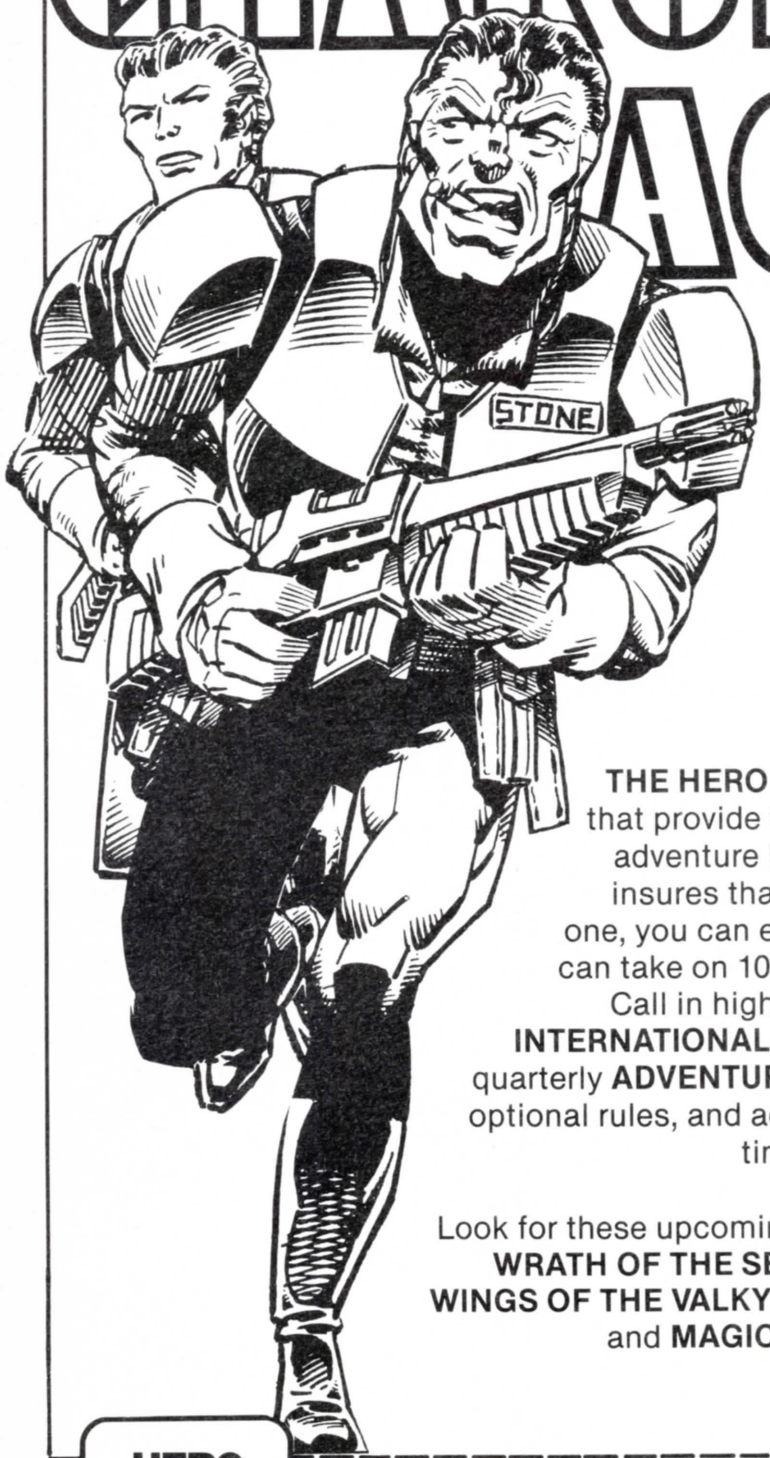

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COVER

As Camlan burns in the background, a wounded King Arthur prepares to meet the mounted attack of his hated rival Mordred. This painting was carefully researched by Roger Raupp, who based the weapons, armor, and fortifications on those in existence in the British Isles after A.D. 500. The battle shown here takes place at Hadrian's Wall, where some sources believe the historical Arthur lived.

LETTERS

Wormy is 100!

Dear Dragon:

Hand me a DRAGON® Magazine, and the first place I'll turn to is the back — to read the comics. And the first comic I'll read is David Trampier's "Wormy." I've been a subscriber since issue #33, and I've watched the good and the mediocre make their way in and out of the ninety-odd issues since then, but "Wormy" has always been outstanding. Mr. Trampier is a master at depicting fast, complex action in a limited number of frames. Considering his many endearing characters, spirited dialogue, clever wit, fantastic artwork, and great attention to detail, I think his strip is often worth the price of the magazine alone! Yet not once can I ever remember reading a letter in DRAGON Magazine commending him. Well, albeit long overdue, I hereby correct this oversight. Long live Tramp, and long live "Wormy"!

Timothy M. Klein
Wilmington NC

Readers will be interested to know that this issue of DRAGON Magazine is the 100th one to contain Tramp's "Wormy." I am a long-time fan of Wormy's adventures myself, and it has been a pleasure to have it with us for so long.

We have a special surprise planned for the next issue of the magazine to celebrate this 100th anniversary — and Wormy's fans will find their knowledge of the series comes in handy! Get ready for it. — RM

Christian games

Dear Dragon:

I've just finished reading Matthew Hamilton's letter in the "Forum" of issue #121, and I feel that a generic role-playing game (such as the AD&D® game) should not have any "set" religion. If a DM wants characters to be Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Taoist, Shinto, or any other religion, it should be up to the DM and the players — *not* the game. If one wants a Christian campaign, get the DRAGONRAID™ game. It has an excellent set of rules, and you learn a lot about the Bible. I have played in successful campaigns without any specific religions for five years. It's not the game that has the religion; it's the players.

Bill Rae
Timnath CO

A number of people wrote in response to Matthew's letter, some favoring his ideas and some opposing them. In general, it is the policy of DRAGON Magazine to avoid publishing material that specifically translates a modern and commonly accepted religion into game-specific terms. We might use an article on monotheistic campaigns, or publish an article on medieval life that includes information on religious beliefs at the time, or even publish game statistics for ancient Roman deities, but (as Bill Rae notes above) we feel that giving a campaign a specific religious background taken directly from real-world religions is the province of the DM and players involved.

On a related topic, some readers have written to say that their parents won't allow them to play certain role-playing games. A compromise solution to this problem would be to try different types of games. Super-powered hero games are often quite acceptable to parents, as are science-fiction and espionage role-playing games. They're certainly worth a try!

Bill also mentions the DRAGONRAID game, which is produced by Adventure Learning Systems. This role-playing system was created to teach Christian principles and ethics through a gaming medium. Interested gamers should contact Adventure Learning Systems, Inc., P.O. Box 25909, Colorado Springs CO 80936, or call (303) 590-7818 for more information. The boxed DRAGONRAID game costs $29.95. — RM

A Finieous fan

Dear Dragon:

I am writing to you as an avid fan of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games, DRAGON Magazine, and "Finieous Fingers" — not necessarily in that order. The end objective of this is to replace my lost copy of *The Finieous Treasury*, and to supply me with any other "Finieous" anthologies.

I realize that you cannot supply me with a copy of *The Finieous Treasury*. However, I am thinking that perhaps the author of the "Finieous" strips would have a few copies lying around he would be willing to part with. So, if you would, please give me the name of the author of the "Finieous" series. I would be one step closer to replacing the best comic-strip anthology I have ever read.

James L. Mailloux
Milton, Fla.

We were not able to contact J.D. Webster, whom we understand teaches flight school in the U.S. Navy in Florida, and the Mail Order Hobby Shop has no copies left of The Finieous Treasury *(published in 1981). The adventures of Finieous and his friends were continued in a short-lived magazine called* Adventure Gaming, *then in* The Space Gamer *for a time. We wish you the best in finding copies of* The Finieous Treasury; *it was wonderful. — RM*

GAMMARAUDERS™
Game Poster Inside

Myths

It was the summer of 1964, and we were at my grandparents' home in the Kentucky hills. I was waiting for a train to come by (the tracks ran right past the front yard) when my dad walked in from town with one of the new half-dollars.

Everyone crowded around to look. I could tell by the way they were peering at the coin that there was something unusual about it. Everyone seemed to be bothered by something.

"I can't make it out," said my aunt. "It looks like it might be, but I can't tell."

"What?" I walked over, train forgotten. After a pause, someone handed the coin to me.

"A hammer and sickle," someone said. "Below his collar, right there — it looks like a hammer and sickle."

I looked down at the odd symbol under John F. Kennedy's profile. I couldn't tell what it was. I wondered what a hammer and sickle were supposed to mean. They didn't sound good.

Years later, I learned that the symbol was just the artist's signature, which — if you were liberal in the ways in which you interpreted your visual data — might be said to look like a hammer and sickle. I never did figure out what it was supposed to have meant had it actually *been* a hammer and sickle. Guess it doesn't matter now.

My cousin Joe knew everything. He knew about flying saucers especially, since a few of them had flown around Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near his home. He told me that one night the Air Force chased flying balls of light around a hill near the base but failed to catch any of them. I was in awe. Joe was 14, but I was 12, and he knew everything.

"They caught one of those saucers," he said. "It crashed, and the Air Force took it back to one of their hangars at the base. It's frozen there with the aliens inside it."

I nodded, eyes full of wonder. Real aliens. I could understand why the Air Force kept it a secret; this was big news. I wondered what the aliens were like and what they wanted here. They were scary but neat. I wished aliens would come around Louisville sometime. I really wanted to see a UFO.

(continued on page 72)

The World Gamers Guide

If you live outside the continental United States and Canada, you can be included in the World Gamers Guide by sending your name and full address (carefully printed or typed, please), plus your gaming preferences, to: World Gamers Guide, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147, United States of America.

The World Gamers Guide is intended for the benefit of gamers who would like to contact other game-players around the world, to share their interests in gaming through correspondence. Each eligible name and address that we receive is published in three consecutive issues of DRAGON Magazine. To be listed for more than three issues, you must send us another postcard or letter.

Overseas American military personnel should consult issue #123 for information on The Overseas Military Gamers Guide and how servicemen may be listed therein.

When listing gaming preferences, write out the complete title of the games you most enjoy. For the purposes of this column, the abbreviations listed below are used.

AD: AD&D® game
BS: BATTLESYSTEM™ Supplement
BT: BATTLETECH® game
CC: CALL OF CTHULHU® game
CH: CHAMPIONS™ game
CL: CHILL™ game
CW: CAR WARS® game
DC: DC™ HEROES game
DD: D&D® game
DW: Doctor Who game
EPT: Empire of the Petal Throne game
G: GURPS® game
GHO: GHOSTBUSTERS™ game
EQ: ELFQUEST® game
GW: GAMMA WORLD® game
JB: James Bond 007 game
JD: Judge Dredd game
MERP: MIDDLE EARTH ROLE PLAYING™ game
MSH: MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game
OA: AD&D *Oriental Adventures* system
P: PARANOIA™ game
PEN: Pendragon game
RC: RECON® game
RM: ROLEMASTER™ game
RQ: RUNEQUEST® game
SF: STAR FRONTIERS® game
SFB: Star Fleet Battles game
SM: SPACE MASTER™ game
ST: STAR TREK®: The RPG
T: TRAVELLER® game
TMNT: TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES® game
TS: TOP SECRET® game
T2000: TWILIGHT: 2000™ game
T2300: TRAVELLER: 2300™ game
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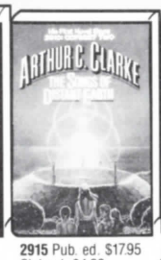

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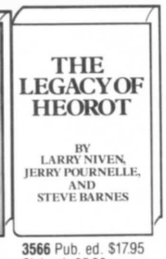

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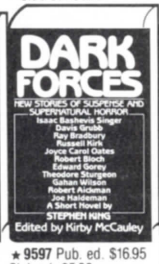

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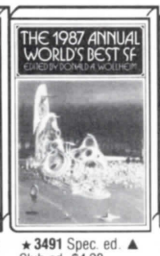

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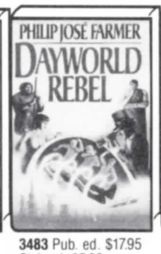

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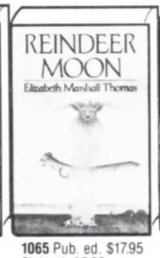

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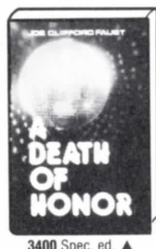

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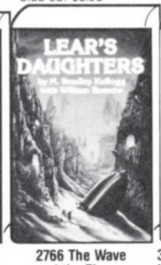

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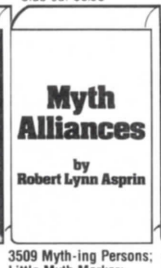

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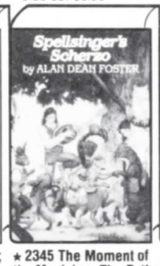

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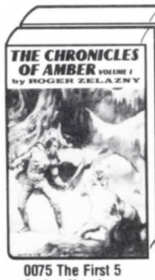

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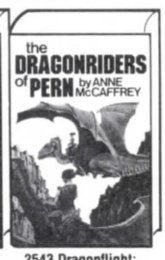

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FORUM

Mass Saving Throws Table

Level	Death	Poly	Wands	Breath	Spells
0	25%	20%	15%	5%	10%
1-2	35%	30%	25%	20%	20%
3-4	40%	35%	30%	25%	25%
5-6	50%	45%	40%	40%	35%
7-8	55%	50%	45%	45%	40%
9-10	65%	60%	55%	60%	50%
11-12	70%	65%	60%	65%	55%
13-14	80%	75%	70%	80%	65%
15-16	85%	80%	75%	85%	70%
17+	90%	85%	80%	85%	75%

Every so often, a game will come up with a situation in which a large group of NPCs will have to make a saving throw. Making individual saves takes up a lot of time, while making group saves tends to get disproportionate results.

The key here is to realize that in large groups, the statistical average becomes an almost absolute rule (try flipping a coin a million times or so). The trick is to realize what fraction of a given group will make the save and apply that fraction to the number of that group making the save.

If the targets have varying hit dice or levels, it will be necessary to break the target group into individual levels and apply the adjustments to each separate group first.

For example, an army is subjected to mass death magic. The army's composition by fighter levels is: 50%, zero level; 30%, 1st-2nd level; 15%, 3rd-4th level; and, 5%, 5th or 6th. Only 25% of the zero levels (12.5% of the total army) should survive, 35% of the 1st and 2nd levels (10.5% of the total army), 40% of the 3rd and 4th levels (6% of the total army), and 50% of the elite (2.5% of the total army). Only 31.5% of the army is still left, and the largest part of it consists of zero-level fighters who are probably going to take to their heels.

Rather than endlessly rolling dice, the effects of the spell can be adjudicated in mere moments, letting the game go on. In the interests of space, only the fighter saving-throw tables have been converted to percentages (using my table), as monsters and fighters are usually the only NPCs who come in large groups, and both use this table.

S.D. Anderson
Whittier CA

I read Brian Chase's letter in issue #121 and would like to respond. I don't really believe [that parthenogenesis among Amazons] is physically possible (though I know very little about Amazons), and if it is possible, too many people would greet that statement the same way I greeted it. I, personally, prefer to use a simpler system, such as that presented in Piers Anthony's *Castle Roogna*. I asked my friend, Chaelmon von Zarovic, about male and female harpies, hoping that his studies of magic would have told him of something like this.

To this, he said: "A-ha! Been reading that magazine that has been coming here for the past . . . what is it, eight months now? Well, be sure to mention me! I've always wanted to get my name in some publication, ever since my half-brother Strahd got his name in that one module, *Ravenloft*. . . .

"Not to dishonor Samanthalus, if he is as great as claimed, or D'driand, even though he has worked with harpies, but I believe they are both wrong. Harpies reproduce as do birds, as they have ever since wild magic caused their species to come into being. However, harpies have trouble keeping their race alive, as male harpies are generally clean and gentle, and refuse to breed with the foul and filthy female harpies. Harpies *can* breed with other species to produce young. Any species with wings, talons, hands, or heads will do, as far as I know. There is one restriction that I know of: Female harpies must breed with a male or something resembling a male *in its natural form*, so no doppelgangers or succubi — or even incubi, as their natural form is that of a succubus — will do. There is a male harpy living in the Baralienesa, the blessed plains of southern Valla, whose father was a harpy and whose mother was a centaur! Due to some magical quirk, male harpies produce only male harpy children, and females bear only female young. I hope this clears up any questions you have about harpies' breeding habits."

Andy Wright
Lincoln NE

Everyone has read about the hypnotist who raises a skin blister by touching a subject with a cold pencil and saying it is red hot (see issue #121). It is one of several mind-over-matter claims I mentioned having reviewed. On the evidence, I concluded that the story is 20th-century folklore. Specifically, I'd like to hear from any reader who has seen such a blister (not just a red spot) produced under conditions that preclude fraud. (Write to me c/o DRAGON® Magazine.)

All of the substantiated claims I have seen for hypnosis and biofeedback concern effects mediated on or through the nervous system. Of course, a hypnotist can make people perspire and can produce many other autonomic effects. But raising a blister is another matter. To begin with, all blisters involve separation of epidermal cells from one another or from their basement membrane — yet there is no nerve supply to the epidermis. However, any college freshman can produce a blister by touching skin with a pencil tip treated with a droplet of any chemical vesicant. Several of these chemicals are easy to obtain from chemistry labs.

Some time ago, I searched the computer files of the National Institute of Health just to find out whether the story about the blister is true. The most recent substantial discussion was by master hypnotists Johnson and Barber in the *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis*, in 1976. They reviewed previous reports and their own experiments on 40 subjects, and concluded that no blisters form in the absence of physical trauma or preexisting blister-causing skin disease (eczema, pemphigus, etc.). I'd be glad to share the review with any DRAGON Magazine readers. Of seven current books on hypnosis at the college of medicine, not one mentions blistering — or any other physical injury — as a *bona fide* effect of hypnosis.

Mind-over-matter claims that violate present thinking about human physiology are central to several "New Age" therapeutic cults. The claims are hard to evaluate because their proponents advertise directly to the public, and don't publish date that might convince other scientists.

Cadaveric spasm and a variety of "stress" effects on the heart are recognized "phantasmal-mental killers," but I am not aware of real people sustaining wounds from holograms, blank shots, rubber knives, magic shows, or other illusions or suggestions. The idea of illusions doing physical harm may have had its origin in apparent medical myths like the hypnotic blister. Judging from correspondence in DRAGON Magazine, it's obvious that different referees handle these things differently. All the different suggestions seem well-reasoned to me. In such matters, the realities of human pathophysiology are largely irrelevant. What matters is fun — which TSR® products supply in large measure.

Edward R. Friedlander, M.D.
Asst. Prof. of Pathology
East Tennessee State Univ.
Johnson City TN

I read with great interest S.D. Anderson's letter in issue #122 and feel compelled to respond with a few thoughts of my own. As a player of three years experience and a DM in the process of fleshing out my own fantasy milieu, I have long since dropped the "gold piece standard" of weight determination. In fact, as a rule, I pay little attention to weight. My concern with weight of various items extends to cautioning my players that such-and-such would probably be too heavy or too cumbersome for them to carry easily. With the players I've been dealing with, this is usually sufficient to prevent them from carrying off loads of treasure.

However, if Mr. Anderson is having problems with a monetary system that seems overly weighted (pardon the pun) toward the gold piece, perhaps the following thoughts may be of assistance. I haven't been using the gold piece standard in my campaign for the past year. Instead, I have devised my own monetary system based on seven metals of trade. A brief description of the system follows.

In order of value, the seven trade metals are: platinum, gold, electrum, steel, silver, bronze, and copper. Each of these trade metals is used, in combination with base metals such as lead and tin, in alloys forming the coin of the realm. All coins are the approximate size of an Eisenho-

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wer silver dollar, varying only in shape and overall design. All coins are of roughly the same weight due to impurities and strengths of alloy. The coins, and their relative values in relation to AD&D game standards, are as follows:

The platinum piece is stamped with the image of a large sword superimposed on a boar's head. It is worth five gold pieces.

The gold piece — yes, my world is on the gold standard — bears on its face the image of a large dragon. Since gold is difficult to mine and rare in any setting (as well it should be), the coin is only about 75% pure.

Electrum, for the uninitiated, is a composite metal made up of roughly equal portions of gold and silver. Like all other coins in the realm, it is little more than 75% pure. The coin itself is six-sided, each side bowed outward so that there are no sharp corners. The coin bears the image of a tankard of ale on its face and is worth half a gold piece.

Steel, because of its use in armor and weaponry and its labor-intensiveness, is valued more highly than silver within my realm. The steel piece has a small hole in its center and bears the image of a small helmet above a pair of crossed swords. Ten steel pieces equal one gold.

The silver piece is octagonal in shape and bears the image of a prancing unicorn. Twenty silver equals one gold.

The bronze piece is roughly pentagonal in shape and can be broken in half to be used in place of copper pieces. One hundred bronze pieces equal one gold piece.

Finally, the copper piece, most common form of currency extant, bears the same relative value. That is, two hundred coppers equal one gold. The coin bears the image of a leaping fish.

The point of all this is that each DM's fantasy milieu need not be solidly rooted in the AD&D game standard as written in the *Players Handbook*. By devising his own monetary system, the DM creates a means by which players from other campaigns may enter his own world, possibly losing some cash in the bargain. In my own campaign, players coming into my realm must change currency before they are able to go about the business of equipping themselves for adventure. At a normal exchange rate of 35%, a wealthy swashbuckler can wind up short a few coppers when he goes to buy a new sword. To make matters more interesting, there are several independent moneychangers operating who will exchange foreign currency at a slightly higher rate and charge a fee in the bargain. Imagine what the thief with a chest of gold and silver would end up with if he exchanged his goods at 38% and had to pay an additional 1,500 gold for the service.

Richard Pike-Brown
Farmington ME

It has come to my attention, after conversations with several AD&D® game players, that a general conception exists which indicates that barbarians achieve their exceptional strength, dexterity, and constitution because they are big, burly, tough, etc. After much study of "barbarian" cultures on our planet, both modern and historical, I must conclude that the above is a misconception, and it may actually be a widespread one.

The "barbarian" of the real world gains his exceptional strength because of the very primitive conditions under which he lives, where muscle power is the major motive power for everything. He gains his exceptional dexterity for the very same reasons, and gains his constitutional benefits because of the rugged, harsh conditions which prevail where he lives. Nevertheless, very few "barbarians" are larger than normal-size humans, although many are smaller than normal, so ascribing to a "barbarian" in AD&D game a size of 6'6" and 350 lbs. *might* account for his strength and constitution, but it would certainly hurt him for dexterity. Physical builds such as this are abnormal and carry a penalty in most conditions and circumstances, to one or more of these three traits.

The modern gymnast compares most favorably in society to the barbarian in the AD&D game, in terms of the physical attributes that the barbarian accrues. Most gymnasts are exceptionally strong, very well built and muscularly proportioned, extremely dextrous, and (due to their physical conditioning and constant workouts) have very good constitutions. Look a second time, and you will notice also that they are generally smaller than average size. Now, compare the weightlifter with the gymnast. The weightlifter is generally bigger, burlier, has bulkier muscles, and is stronger overall because of his size. He is in good physical health, but he gives away a terrific bonus in dexterity to the gymnast, and in proportion to overall body size and weight, the gymnast may still be stronger proportionally.

The Seri Indians of Sonora State, Republic of Mexico, are small, dexterous (very quick and fast-reacting, etc.), in excellent physical condition, and generally stronger than average (in the gymnast's sense). I've observed, partied with, and played among them for 10 years. The San Blas and related tribes (the last modern headhunters and cannibals; they quit practicing in the 1960s) in Panama are shorter, extremely dexterous, exceptionally strong, and have the most rugged constitutions I have ever seen. I worked, lived, and played among some of the San Blas Indians for five years. The Vikings, from whom I am descended, may perhaps be stronger overall but are definitely not proportionate to the San Blas's standards, and they have to give up dexterity, if not strength. Of these three, only the Vikings could *perhaps* be considered larger than normal size.

Therefore, I suggest AD&D game players need to rethink their position on "barbarians" in general and ascribe to them a more natural (and normal appearing) physique than that of being grotesque, bulky, musclebound, and giant-tall!

Loring A. Windblad, Sr.
Florence AZ

In Bob Hughes' letter in issue #121, he stated that though the D&D® and AD&D games are similar, there are two major differences: complexity and flexibility. I have no argument with this statement, but he goes on to say that it is the D&D game that is flexible and the AD&D game that is complex. I have played both games and, in my opinion, this is wrong. I abandoned the D&D game rules for the AD&D game rules because the latter were more flexible. I believe it is this flexibility that can also make the advanced rules more complex . . . new rules can be created whenever they are required. This makes the game as complex or as simple as desired, but lets it retain its flexibility. Why else would DRAGON Magazine print all those articles containing *optional* new rules? I myself have a large collection of articles which I use in my campaign, and they do not disrupt the balance or the flexibility of it. They only serve to make the game more realistic, give it more character, and, yes, make it more enjoyable.

Tom James
Camlachie, Ont.

I salute you, Michael Estus [issue #123], for trying to bring the TOP SECRET® game to the Forum. I guess some things just need to be pushed to receive response and more ideas.

Yes, there is a very small margin for error in the game. It really puts tension into players that is normally lost when friends sit around a table and play a game. And, it is closer to real life and real espionage the way it's supposed to be handled: carefully planned and executed, with lives hanging on a thread and quick executions rather than "Rambo" shootouts.

Another subject is the hand-to-hand combat system. The original system was one of the main things that hooked me to the game. The new, quicker system does seem to keep things moving and players interested, but it takes the old fun of the fights, which were full of maneuvers and [the choice of fighting] styles reflecting the characters.

Yet another subject is the new alignment system. Can someone give me some examples of the usefulness of this, besides telling agents about governments and their leaders' alignments, and for determining how NPCs get along? Certainly, any relations with PCs should only be based on the players' role-playing.

Chuck Amburn
Casselberry FL

Recently, a trend has developed in the TOP SECRET game: the addition of heavier and heavier weaponry to the espionage campaign. While I am the first to admit that heavy weaponry like machine guns, artillery, and tactical nuclear weapons can be of use in certain situations (nothing persuades an unwilling agent quicker than a thermonuclear weapon), they are often overused in games to replace stealth and deduction with constant firefights. Merle Rasmussen's article "Operation: Zondraker," in issue #122, illustrates well the change of trends. On page 56 is a table of calibers — nothing unusual to the TOP SECRET game player, but this table runs all the way to an astounding 1.600 caliber, to include 23, 30, and 40mm weapons! Granted, such large calibers *might* possibly be seen in a lunar environment, but how can a lunar lander or a "moon buggy" spare the room for a 30mm chain gun and ammunition? After all, that's what sort of weapons come in those calibers. The 30mm size is basically seen in two weapons: the Hughes chain gun and the Avenger cannon, a six-barreled Gatling system used in the A-10 antiarmor aircraft. So where would weapons of such firepower be found in a lunar environment? In any espionage game? It is the same with 23mm and 40mm; both are used solely in military cannon employed by the U.S.S.R. and U.S.A., respectively. If such weaponry is seen often in a TOP SECRET game campaign, then the game *is*, contrary to previous claims, a military game.

I would suggest a military supplement to the TOP SECRET game that documents all the aspects of the game requiring heavy weaponry. Agents could work for military intelligence with more dangerous missions, requiring heavier equipment. I feel that Mr. Rasmussen designed the TOP SECRET game with James Bond and Napoleon Solo in mind, not Rambo. If agents desire to be mercenaries, there are games available that allow it; but, if the player wants to be a spy, then leave the cannon at home and bring the PPK.

Dennis McLaughlin
Camp Lejeune NC

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The Ecology

One of a broad and

by Nigel D. Findley

"And," said Baylock with great relish, "thus ends the tale of Nex the Archer. Somehow, he escaped the will-o'-wisps with his life; how, we'll never know — at least, not from him." The guide nodded sagely. "Aye, he escaped with his life. But his mind is another story. Nex will never speak again, I hear." He glanced at his employer — Araman, that was his name — huddled nervously on the other side of the fire. "It happened near here, they say," Baylock continued innocently, with an airy gesture at the mangroves pressing close around them. Araman looked about him, licking his lips nervously. Baylock grinned to himself.

Then he decided to let the other man off the hook. Araman wasn't such a bad sort, not like many of the rich dimwits Baylock had wet-nursed through the marshes in the past. Certainly, he was a soft city dweller, not tempered to hardship like Baylock and his lads. But he'd come to Baylock with a fair price — and without the rankling disdain that most city dwellers had for the mist-eaters who lived and worked along the marshes. Araman also kept up and pulled his weight — that, moreso than most.

"But no worries," Baylock finished. "That was five years ago — or more — and nobody's seen a will-o'-wisp around here since. Don't concern yourself with it, sir."

Across the fire, Araman glanced up with surprise at the guide's "sir." Since they'd struck the deal for guided passage through the marsh, Baylock had addressed him as nothing but "you." What had mellowed the grizzled mist-eater, Araman couldn't guess. But he wasn't going to question it.

Still, Araman was uncomfortable. He looked again at the gnarled mangroves and saw that they seemed to move in the flickering firelight. Baylock's three "boys" — actually men of Araman's age — lay wrapped in their sleeping rolls, well away from the fire. Their backs were turned to the warmth as if to scorn the city man's weak need for a fire. But Baylock himself sat near the blaze. Was he trying to be companionly? Whatever the reason, if the guide was suddenly willing to talk, Araman wanted to take advantage of the chance.

of the Greenhag

evil family of hags

"So," Araman said, his voice weaker than he liked. "No will-o'-wisps. Then what *does* live around here? The most dangerous creature?"

Baylock smiled. "Apart from the vultures and the giant lizards and the occasional mist dragon, you mean?" He thought for a moment, and his smile faded. "Well," he went on slowly, "there *are* tales of a shellycoat."

Araman glanced at the three backs turned to the fire. Had they stiffened slightly? "What's a shellycoat?" the city dweller asked. He wasn't sure that he should have inquired.

Baylock looked for another stick to add to the fire. "Maybe you know it as a greenhag."

No doubt about it this time. Baylock's men were listening. One stirred briefly as if turning in his sleep, but he merely positioned himself to hear the discussion better. Araman leaned forward, fascinated but nervous. Anything that could scare these mist-eaters was worth knowing of. "Tell me about it."

Baylock shrugged and waved a hand. "Not much to tell," he said. "The shellycoat — the greenhag — well, it's like the annis, but even more dangerous."

"It's like the . . . ?"

Baylock sighed. "The annis," he repeated patiently. "A blue giantess. As vicious and cruel a creature as you'd ever be sorry enough to meet. You find them in wilderness mountains, swamps, forests — any climate but the warmest. Just about anywhere well away from civilization. Same with the greenhag. Both are relatives of the night hag." He leaned forward. "You *do* know of the night hag?"

"Of course. But how — how are they related?"

"Simple. What do you get when you cross a night hag with a human or a demi-human, eh? You get a greenhag."[1] Baylock chuckled. "You think that every time a night hag goes out hunting, it's only to drag some poor soul off to Hades? Oh, no; sometimes it's not a man's *life* she wants. Enough to make your blood run cold, it is."

Baylock stopped suddenly and cocked his head, listening. "Hear that?" he asked quietly.

Araman strained his ears. Nothing: just the constant background murmur of the swamp insects. Suddenly, a chilling howl broke above the subtle murmur. "What was that?" Araman gasped. Baylock's men got to their feet in remarkable time, short swords and daggers free in their hands. They seemed quite awake.

"A wolf, I think." Baylock called some instructions, and his three men sheathed blades, unlimbered short bows, and melted into the darkness out of the firelight. "Don't worry," he said, turning back to Araman. "My boys'll take care of it, whatever it is. If they can't stab it, shaft it, or slice it, they'll salute it. Now, where were we?"

"The greenhag," Araman reminded him. "And the shellycoat, if there's any difference."

Baylock shook his head. "No, no difference. 'Shellycoat' is just what we call her when she lives in a swamp or river. That's when she's most dangerous, to my mind. Sometimes she'll lie in wait underwater to rend fishermen — aye, and mist-eaters, too — as they pass by."[2]

Araman shivered. "You say 'she.' Are there no male greenhags?"

"Never," Baylock said flatly. "Some say it's because the female hag's blood is dominant; some say it's because the night hag mother eats the male babes at birth. Whichever. No male greenhags." A thin smile wrinkled his face. "Though that's not to say the greenhag doesn't get a yen for male companionship, if you take my meaning. She just has to look for it outside her own species, like her mother, though the greenhag prefers the big boys like ogres and giants. And *that's* where you get the annis.[3] Now, the annis—"

Both men stiffened as a bowstring sang in the darkness. Another twang was followed by a hoarse call of "Over here!" Through the clatter of underbrush, a high-pitched cry assaulted the evening air. The cry ended abruptly in silence.

Baylock started to get to his feet, then slowly sat down again and forced a smile. "Whatever that is, my boys are giving it what for." He nervously eyed the treeline. "Anyway, the annis follows her mother's attitude towards ogres and giants. She deals with them for the same things: information, provender, and companionship. On occasion, you even find an annis living with an ogre or giant tribe as the wife of the tribal chieftain." Baylock smiled briefly. "If that isn't a case of the power behind the throne, I don't know what is."[4]

The sound of combat again stirred the night. A commotion in the undergrowth was followed quickly by another twanging bowstring — then by a cry hoarse with agony: "Help me, Baylock!"

The guide was on his feet in a moment, his blade drawn. "Stay put," he said grimly. "I'll be back." Rushing off into the brush, Baylock disappeared into the blackness.

Araman wrapped his cloak closer around him. He glanced down at his hands; they shook as though with the palsy. He clenched them, and the shaking stopped. The night grew quiet and long.

Araman didn't see the figure until she had stepped into the clearing, squinting her orange eyes against the light of the fire. Her rags were tattered, and dark blood — not hers — fell from her black claws and splotched her green skin. Withered lips drew back from needle-pointed fangs in a mockery of a smile. When she spoke, it was in the same pain-roughened voice Araman had just heard, but black with irony. "Help me, Araman!"

Araman knew it would do no good to scream.

But he screamed anyway.

Notes

1. After mating with a human or demi-human male, a pregnant night hag remains in Hades throughout the 13-month gestation period. Following this time, she returns to the Prime Material Plane to give birth. From the moment of delivery, the newborn greenhag is able to fend for herself (which is just as well, since the night hag mother abandons the infant immediately). The greenhag, which is always female, is similar in appearance to a human infant; only her long black fingernails and the greenish tinge of her skin give away her true nature.

At birth, the greenhag has only 2 HD, and does limited damage (1-2/1-2; no strength bonus). She maintains her characteristic armor class of −2, however. The greenhag originally has no spell-like powers or mimicry ability, and so depends on cunning and stealth to catch her food — generally, anything that moves, with humans and demi-humans preferred. The greenhag grows rapidly, reaching her full size, strength, and powers at the age of 18 months.

The greenhag's alignment is always that of the mother: neutral evil. Her intelligence, which ranges from low to very, is equal to the father's intelligence score minus 1d6 (as long as this figure does not put it out of the allowable range: 5-12). The language of the night hag, which is wrongly reputed to be a dialect of annis, is actually a degenerate form of the tongue spoken by night hags. The greenhag's knowledge of her own language is innate; other languages (and sounds she can mimic) must be learned.

The greenhag's spell-like abilities and her inhuman strength are also degenerate gifts of the monster's mother. Dilution with human or demi-human blood has weakened the night hag's extraplanar powers, making some abilities mere shadows of the original powers (*invisibility* instead of *etherealness, change self* instead of *polymorph self, weakness* instead of *enfeeblement*). Some of these powers are removed altogether (e.g., the night hag's ability to *gate* in demons or devils and her resistance to nonmagical weapons). As if in recompense for this, some new powers, which are more in tune with the Prime Material Plane, have been given to the greenhag (e.g., *pass without trace, speak with monsters,* etc.). A greenhag's lifespan is usually around 500 years (less than her mother's 1,000-year span because of the diluting effect of human or demi-human blood).

2. A greenhag often makes her lair in an underwater cave, using her *water breathing* ability (which lasts for 27 turns, or 4½ hours) to dwell therein. If no suitable body of water is available, the lair is usually concealed (for example, screened by overhanging plants or shielded from view by a large boulder). Being a cowardly creature at heart, a greenhag will go to great lengths to prevent her lair from being found, often going so far as to enter and leave it only while *invisible.*

This innate cowardice also dictates the greenhag's favored methods of hunting: lying in wait while *invisible* or otherwise concealed, or using her mimicry — which is often coupled with her *change self* ability — to lure prey into an indefensible position (for example, into quicksand) or away from comrades. Although physically very powerful, the greenhag is a bully who often shuns a fair fight. If confronted by strong, determined opposition, she will flee. Conversely, if her prey is much weaker than she, a greenhag will cruelly "play" with it (in the same manner that a cat plays with a bird or mouse) before killing and eating it.

3. Although basically solitary creatures, greenhags sometimes deal with ogres and hill giants (usually those of lower intelligence who are easily dominated), trading baubles looted from their victims for information, food, and protection as necessary. Quite frequently, greenhags also mate with smaller members of ogre or hill-giant tribes. Any male ogre or giant may father the greenhag's child.

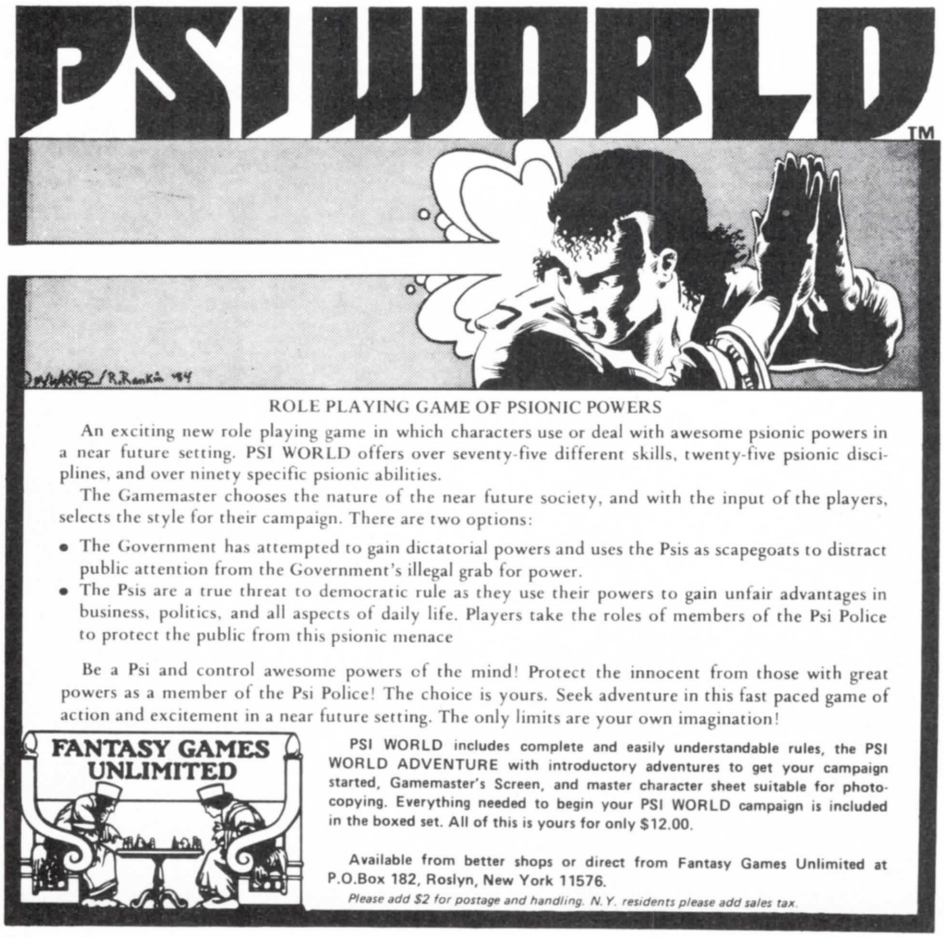
After a seven-month gestation period, the greenhag gives birth to an annis. Like the greenhag, the newborn annis (which is always female) is similar in appearance to a large human infant, again except for skin color. At birth, the annis has 1 HD and can attack by bite only, doing 1d4 hp damage (no strength bonus). Her armor class from birth is 0. Like the greenhag, the annis infant has no spell-like powers, but can sometimes depend on her ogrish or giantish father to feed her for a brief while. The greenhag provides nothing for the baby annis, which the mother abandons at birth. The annis grows even more rapidly than the greenhag, reaching full maturity at the age of 12 months.

As the night hag's characteristics are diluted by breeding with a human or demi-human, so are the greenhag's characteristics weakened by the addition of ogrish or giantish blood. The annis's innate knowledge of language is even more imperfect, so her tongue becomes a further degeneration of the original night hag speech. The annis's resistance to punishment is decreased, and more of the night hag's powers have vanished. The annis's lifespan, too, is lessened, dropping to approximately double the lifespan of her father's race. Even the annis's alignment is changed from neutral evil to a more selfish, chaotic bent.

Apart from size, the only boon the annis receives from her father is increased strength. The annis's enhanced range of intelligence (to a maximum of exceptional) is a special case, resulting more from the recessive inheritance of night hag intelligence; the higher range of intelligence has skipped a generation. This throwback situation also explains the annis's return to the night hag's purity of complexion.

4. The annis shares her mother's bullying nature — although she is not as much of a coward — and will often be found amongst a tribe of non-humans if she can dominate them (usually by dominating the leader). An ogre or giant clan that includes an annis is generally more cunning and cruel in nature than the norm.

An annis will mate with an ogre or hill giant, if one can be found. Such a mating rarely (10%) results in live offspring. Although not strictly a mule, the annis is not a very fertile strain. When the annis does produce offspring, the infant is always the same race as the father, and always female. The only legacies of the mother are increased resilience (i.e., the offspring always has the maximum hit points for the species in question) and a bluish tinge to her complexion. All other characteristics are derived from the father. Unlike the night hag and greenhag, the annis usually succors the infant as would a female of the father's species. Ω



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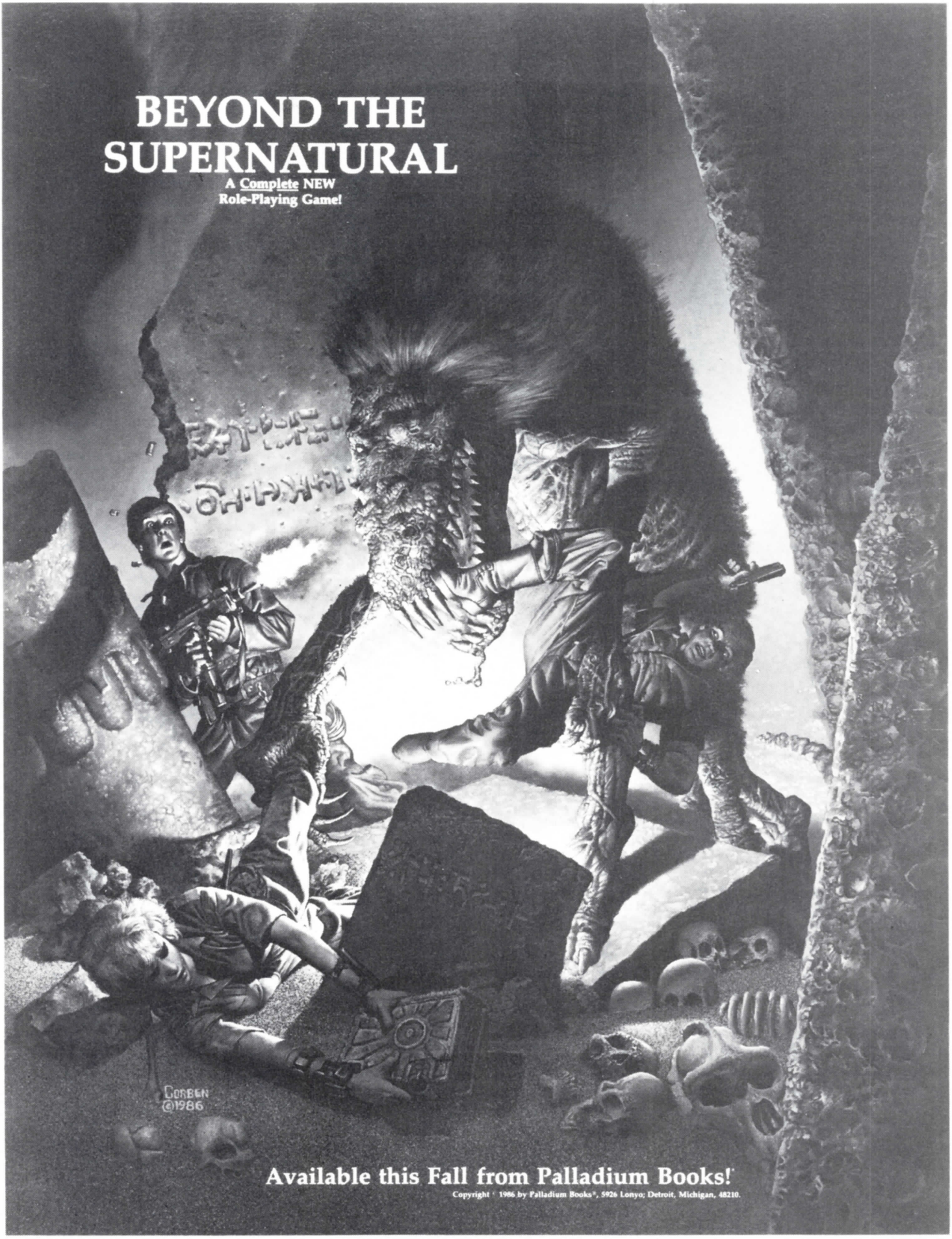

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Woodlands of the Realms

Magical and mundane forests for FORGOTTEN REALMS™ campaigns

by Ed Greenwood

Many varieties of trees common on Earth are also common in the Forgotten Realms. In warmer regions, the date palm, coconut palm, ebony, cypress, and mangrove are common. Evergreens exist in the northern regions, and most hardwoods live in the central forests. Birch and yew are rare in the Realms; alder, boxwood, the plane tree, redwood, and sycamore are unknown. Cork and rubber trees are found only in particular areas in the far South and are disappearing quickly due to heavy harvests. (Many recent explorations of the lands of Chult have been undertaken simply to find new supplies of these woods.) Common trees of the Realms include:

Apple	Hawthorn	Shadowtop*
Ash	Hickory	Silverbark*
Beech	Hiexel*	Spruce
Blueleaf*	Hornbeam	Suth*
Cedar	Ironwood	Thorn
Cherry	Laspar*	Vundwood*
Chestnut	Maple	Weirwood*
Duskwood*	Oak	Willow
Elm	Phandar*	Zalantar*
Felsul*	Pine	

Trees marked with an asterisk are unique to the Realms; these common species are described hereafter. Certainly, other unique species of trees may be found in the Realms as well.

Blueleaf trees have leaves of an eerie, gleaming blue hue, which are many-pointed and rather like those of maples in appearance. Blueleaf trees are very delicate and have many small branches. As a rule, these trees are very supple; they bend in high winds and under heavy ice loads (rather than breaking), and grow in thick stands which sometimes reach 40′ in height. The trunks of these trees rarely attain diameters in excess of 8″. Blueleaf trees yield a vivid blue dye much favored by clothesmakers; the dye is derived from the sap and crushed leaves of the blueleaf trees. These trees are also favored for firewood cutting because they produce beautiful, leaping blue flames while burning.

Duskwood trees are 60′ tall. These straight trees have smooth, bare trunks marked by crowns of tiny branches. Duskwoods are named for the dark, eerie appeance of stands of these closely-clustered black trunks. Under the black bark (which shows a silver-gray color when newly broken or peeled) is wood that is smokey gray when cut — and as hard as iron. Most mast spars and building beams are made of mature duskwood trunks. They are hard and resistant to fire, and they smolder rather than blaze when set aflame. As a result, duskwood trees tend to survive forest fires and the axes of woodcutters seeking firewood.

Felsul are gnarled, twisted trees with a deep brown hue and a crumbling texture (old bark constantly rots and flakes away from a mature felsul). Young felsul trees are light green in color and are as fresh and soft as leafy plants. It is only after felsul are 10 or more years old (and 3′ or more in height) that they darken in color and begin to twist and curve as their roots dig deeper and the winds shape their frail trunks. Felsul grow on rocky crags, cliff edges, and clefts, providing the only tree cover in many cold, rocky areas of the North. In the spring, these trees burst into flower; the crushed petals of their vivid yellow-and-purple blossoms yield a delightful, spicy perfume highly prized by ladies in the Realms. Faded felsul blooms are carefully gathered each year by venturesome souls, for a large sack of these petals can command a price of up to 3 gp if supplies are scarce. Felsul wood burns poorly and is too weak and gnarled for furniture or buildings, although felsul-root is a favorite of those who carve images, toys, and holy symbols.

Hiexel is a green, waxy wood used for signal beacon fires. It is also used to smoke meat or fish, or to drive out animals or enemies. As it burns, this wood creates clouds of thick, black, billowing smoke that are both oily and choking. Hiexel grows in thickets in ravines and on hillsides. The trees themselves are gently curved and are marked by sparse branches. As a whole, these trees have an upright, oval foliage shape. Hiexel is a brittle wood that tends to succumb to rot easily, but its durable bark is resilient and lasting, and has been used in the making of tomes of magic and lore (see "Pages from the Mages III," DRAGON® issue #92"). Windstorms often fell large or old hiexel; with age or much growth, these trees become unstable. In such instances, portions of their wood dry out unevenly, causing the trees to topple easily. This same tendency makes hiexel unsuitable for use in palisades, bridges, sledges, or other structures exposed to stress and hard usage. Hiexel is very common in the Dalelands.

Laspar trees resemble cedars in texture and aroma. They are ever-bearing and have flat needles that grow in spherical clusters on the ends of a "cloak" of delicate branches. These cloaks swirl protectively about a straight, strong, central trunk. Laspar wood is pitchy and tends to snap and spit numerous sparks when burnt; however, beneath its close-shingled, smooth bark of dusky green hue (which often forms a surface of small, interlocking concave plates with few large fissures or rough spots), the laspar's wood is golden yellow and easily worked for furniture or building, much like pine. Boiled laspar needles (the clusters of needles are known as shags) are an effective laxative drunk in the North, and crushed laspar needles are used in the making of certain scents, such as those worked into torches and candles of superior quality. Laspar moths, so named because they seem attracted to the smell of laspar trees, are gray, furry-winged insects of up to 4″ in length, with a wingspan of up to 8″.

Phandar trees are now uncommon due to heavy cutting of this wood for many years. This dearth comes as no surprise: The curving boughs of a phandar tree sprout in great numbers from a massive, knobby central trunk. These boughs are tough, springy, and terrifically strong. Phandar trees have triangular leaves of

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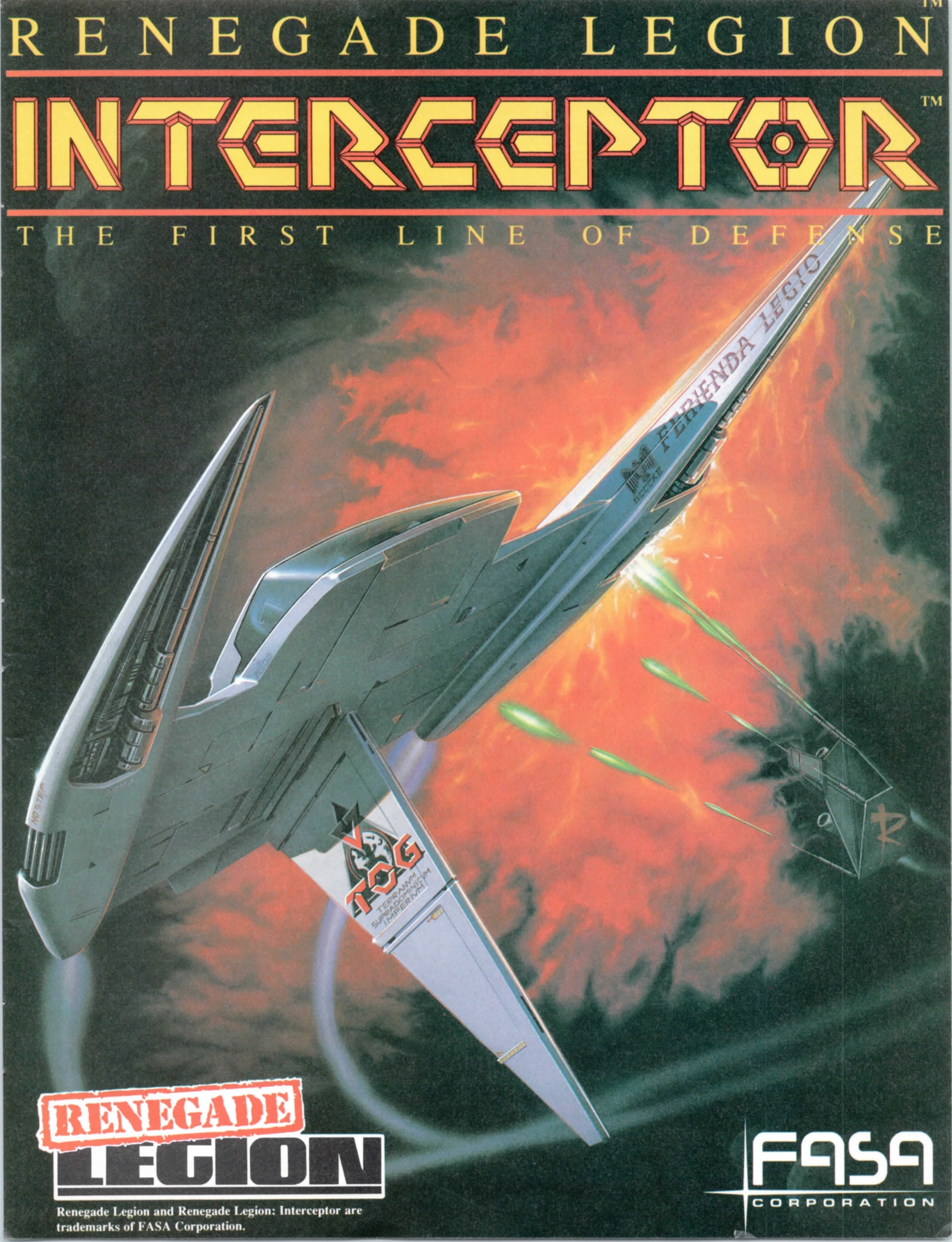

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mottled shades of green. Often, these trees grow to 60′ in height. The foliage of the phandar tree is shaped somewhat like an egg laid horizontally, the long axis of the egg growing in a tail in relation to the prevailing winds. Phandar wood itself is greenish brown, with thin, black grain lines running throughout the depths of the wood. Jewelry carved of the wood usually makes use of these grain lines in its cutting to create patterns or pleasing waves of parallel lines. Tocken (see "Music of the Forgotten Realms," DRAGON issue #123) are usually made of phandar wood. Bows and weapon handles are likewise often fashioned of phandar wood, although the curving nature of the wood makes it unsuitable for spear shafts and the like.

Phandar trees are very hardy; many young specimens have been uprooted and carried for many miles and long days before being replanted. Such private growing schemes have spread the phandar over a wider area of the Realms than the rolling Dales and upland hills of the central Sword Coast North that was their previous habitat, and this has probably prevented the complete extinction of this tree at the hands of loggers.

The massive central trunk of the phandar tree resembles the feared roper in natural appearance. The phandar's trunk is so strong that it can serve as a pillar to support the roof of a dwelling (although such trunks are rarely more than 20′ tall) without preparation. These trunks may also be chiselled and notched to accept crossbeams without cracking or splitting.

Shadowtop trees are the soaring giants of the forests of the Realms. These trees grow very rapidly (up to 2′ a year, if the weather is warm and damp enough), allowing some shadowtops to reach 90′ or more in height. Trees of this size often have massive, pleat-ridged trunks flaring up to 20′ in diameter at the base. The tree gets its name from the dense clusters of feather leaves which adorn its limbs. A shadowtop's leaves have frilled edges like those of an oak, with an irregular number of small fingers. These leaves are copper-colored on the underside all year round and deep green on the upper surface. The tops of these leaves fade to match the underside in the fall. The leaves cluster from spreading branches that make up the top 12′ or so of the tree, which has few or no lower branches.

Shadowtop wood ("shadow wood") is fibrous and tough, but unsuitable for carving or structural work, as it has a tendency to split down its length under stress into a splayed mass of fibers. The fibers themselves are valued in ropemaking; a few are added to the twist when a rope is being made, increasing the strength and durability of the coil when it is complete. Shadowtop wood burns slowly (it must be ignited by a leaping fire composed of other woods) but very cleanly, with little smoke. The resultant flames generate an hot fire. Shadowtop wood is thus favored for cooking.

If more than four wagonloads of wood are felled, cut up, and carried off for sale in a city, there will be a large remainder, which is usually left behind for later trips. By custom, travelers can usually cut enough from this pile for a night's fire without evoking anyone's ire.

Silverbark trees flourish in wet ground, generally near bogs and swamps, but sometimes in deep ravines in the depths of large forests. Individual trees are thin and straight, and seldom more than 15′ tall. Their trunks, which are usually 3-4″ in diameter, serve the poor as staves, poles, and (with points hardened in a slow fire) defensive stakes. The silver bark which gives the tree its name is loose and crumbles easily (although it does not peel off in strips as birch does). The wood of this tree dries out thoroughly after it is cut and, after a year or so, is brittle and weak. As a result, silverbark will not do for lance shafts, fence rails, or structural work. Silverbark is plentiful and grows thickly. Its leaves are large and oval-shaped, with pointed tips and tiny saw-toothed edges. These leaves are a deep red in color, with purple patches where they attach to their stems and thence to the branches. The leaves are durable and waxy, and are often used to wrap fresh game.

Suth trees are squat, splayed trees common around the edges of the Shaar, in the woods of Chondath, and farther south in the Realms (the name may be a corruption of "south"). They grow in almost horizontal, angled sections, slanting in one direction, branching out (the low branches providing balance), then slanting back upon themselves in another direction. A few of these trees can provide a visual screen or wall barring passage to all who can't crawl under the lowest branches, for the branches of the different trees intertwine and double back into a tightly-woven mass. Suth leaves are soft but long and spike-shaped. These leaves grow in bunches at the ends of branches and in a ring around each segment where the tree limbs branch and change direction. Suth wood is extremely hard and durable — so hard that it is difficult to work unless one has the finest tools. Suthwood is the preferred wood for shields; if soaked in water, such shields do not catch fire easily and almost never splinter. A heavy blow might crack a suthwood shield (any saving throw vs. crushing blow should be at +2), but it wouldn't shatter it into pointed fragments. Suthwood is also used in the manufacture of book covers because thin sheets of this wood retain astonishing strength for decades (see "Pages From the Mages V," DRAGON issue #100).

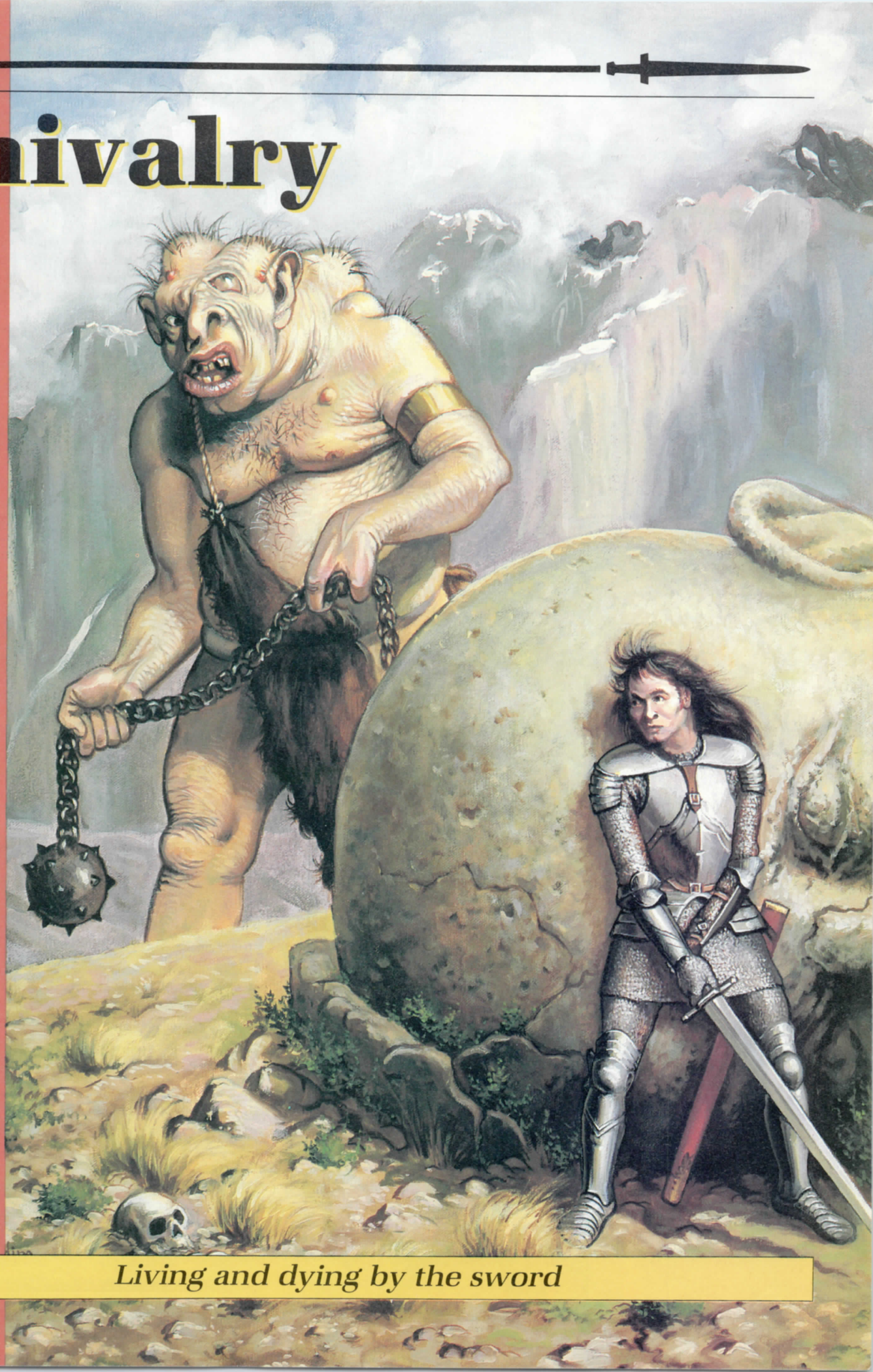
Vundwood trees are short and scrubby. They grow on poor ground and are named for a famous nomadic tribe of bandits, the Vunds, who were wiped out long ago by the combined efforts of the fledgling kingdoms of Cormyr and Sembia. The Vunds raided with impunity for many years because none could field strength of arms against them. They rode like demons, as one merchant put it, and would melt away when faced with determined resistance, only to slaughter the next caravan that came along. The Vunds inhabited the lands west of the Sea of Fallen Stars, threatening the long, overland trade routes between the Inner Sea lands and the Sword Coast. Today, those rolling, seemingly endless plains are still dominated by small stands of vundwood trees.

Vundwood trees rarely top 15′. Rather than having a distinct central trunk, vundwood trees have many small radiating branches, which in turn split into smaller branches. Vundwood is mostly used for firewood, though it does have a variety of other uses. Felled vundwood trees, for example, are often dragged into lines to form rough fence enclosures, which are used by farmers to hold livestock or by caravans to serve as overnight paddocks. Vundwood is reddish brown and has a spicy smell much like that of cinnamon. The species has smooth, thin bark of a deep red color and leaves of pale green edged with white. These edges lighten to yellow in winter or when a tree is dying.

Weirwood is a rare and highly prized variety of tree that grows into huge, many-branched forest giants if undisturbed. Most surviving weir trees are found in the depths of the huge forests of the North, and they are actively protected by dryads, hamadryads, druids, treants, and rangers. Weirwood will not burn in normal fires; only magical fire can ignite or consume it. Weir trees yield resilient, durable wood that is favored in the making of musical instruments such as lutes and harps. Instruments fashioned of this wood create a particular warm, clear sound that resonates without distortion. Weir trees are very similar to oaks in appearance but are seldom seen by men. A *bluelight, dancing lights, faerie fire, light,* or *continual light* radiance that comes into contact with nondweomered weirwood, cut or living, lingers around the wood for 2-4 rounds, even if the source of the radiance is removed.

Zalantar is a wood of the South; it is seldom seen in northern lands. These trees grow in profusion in Chult and along the southern coasts of Faerun. The Zalantar tree is characterized by black bark and wood, and white or beige leaves. These leaves branch in groups of several trunks from a central root. Zalantar trees may reach 80′ in height, but are usually half that height. The trees seem to grow in any terrain short of the most mountainous. Zalantar wood is strong and yet easily worked; many caravan wagons, litters, and wheels are made of it, as are parts of many southern dwellings. This wood is sometimes called "blackwood" in the North. Ω

Chivalry



Living and dying by the sword

The Code of Chivalry

Orders of knighthood in the AD&D® game

by Mark Easterday

The world of the AD&D® game symbolizes the eternal struggle of good against evil. However, players of lawful-good characters often find themselves at a great disadvantage as the evil characters have far greater powers at their disposal — poisons, thieves' and assassins' guilds, demons and devils, etc. To offset this imbalance while offering players of lawful-good characters more opportunities for role-playing, this article presents a set of rules outlining chivalry, honor, and orders of knights in the AD&D game world. This material supplements the information on the feudal code given for cavaliers in *Unearthed Arcana*, though it is more restrictive in certain ways, particularly in allowable alignments for knighthood.

The code of chivalry is the heart and soul of the knight. It is the heroic player character who — with justice, valor, loyalty, modesty, courtesy to equals, compassion to weakness, and devotion to law and good — becomes the champion of the oppressed and the defender of all that's good. Those who follow the code of chivalry pledge to fight against powerful dragons, evil enchanters, and wicked beings of all sorts until they are overthrown and rendered powerless.

There is no greater honor among lawful-good knights than the conquest of evil. Honor implies renown, good conduct, and the pursuit of justice. A knight's word of honor is the most solemn oath known; once a knight gives his word on something, he may never go back on it. The respect, glory, and admiration given a knight depend upon his level of honor.

Chivalry and honor are both incorporated in the various orders of knights. Training, leadership, protection, a base of operations, and a code of values are benefits and advantages of joining an order. The following description of an order of knights applies to all orders created with these guidelines.

Organization of an order

The organization of an established order of knights usually consists of the following: a Master (at least 13th level of ability), a Seneschal (the Master's deputy, at least 9th level), a Marshal (responsible for direction of military affairs, at least 9th level), a group of High Officers (responsible for the order's castles and troops, at least 9th level each), and a main body of knights (4th level and up). Fighters, rangers, cavaliers, and paladins may join an order of knights; barbarians and nonfighter classes cannot. Clerics may optionally be allowed to join

particularly religious orders of knights as full members.

Many NPC knights of an order can be considered to be average knights of renown, and knights holding positions of authority are usually considered to be knights of quality. Statistics for both types of knights are on page 17 of *Legends & Lore*.

An order usually has one castle under its control for every 10-50 knights in the order. Every order must have at least one castle. The castles have the basic staff required and a garrison of five zero-level soldiers per knight assigned to the castle. Aid and protection for all characters of good alignments can be gained at an order's castle. An order will fight to defend the lands and towns near the castle if the populace is of good alignment. An attack against one castle belonging to an order of knights is regarded as an attack against them all, although personal duels and quarrels among knights need not be avenged by others unless perpetrated by evil forces.

To join an order of knights, a character must be a lawful-good fighter, ranger, cavalier, or paladin of 4th level or greater. The character must also challenge and defeat a knight of the order (of equal level) in a joust. [*Detail on the conduct of a joust are given in "Surely, You Joust!" on pages 22-29, DRAGON® issue #118.*]

Rules of an order

The rules of an order of knights may vary in specifics, but the most basic rules are given below. Others may be added as desired, such as those from page 16 of *Unearthed Arcana* or from other articles in this section on chivalry.

1. Knights of the order must have a heavy war horse, a lance, a sword (except short swords), a secondary melee weapon, any armor (except those forbidden to cavaliers), a shield, and a helmet.
2. Knights of the order cannot use magic or magical items of an evil nature or origin.
3. Knights of the order cannot gamble and must pay a tithe of 10% of their total income to the order once per month.
4. Knights of the order cannot overindulge when drinking or eating.
5. Knights of the order must bear the coat of arms and colors of the order on their shield, tunic, and clothes.
6. Knights of the order must adhere strictly to the laws and codes of chivalry, honor, and lawful-good alignment.
7. If a knight of the order is challenged by one who wishes to enter the order, he must accept the challenge or suffer a loss of honor.
8. Knights of the order respect, defend, and aid all who are weaker than they, and show proper regard for the opposite sex.
9. Knights of the order may not bear arms against each other except in situations that the law permits (challenges, games and tournaments, etc.).
10. Chapters of the order (meetings) must assemble three or four times per year, and all knights must attend.
11. Knights of the order may challenge other knights of the order for positions of authority (such as High Office) if they are of equal or greater level to the one challenged. The challenge is resolved in a series of jousts until one knight is unhorsed. Combat continues on foot until one knight is defeated.
12. Knights of the order may joust against other knights of the order during tournaments held during chapters of the order.
13. Knights must grant mercy to any opponent who yields (surrenders). The defeated opponent must then take an oath never to bear arms against the knight who defeated him again. This applies to warfare as well as tournament fights.
14. Knights of the order may marry only persons of good alignment.
15. Knights of the order may participate in adventures with other characters of good or neutral alignment. The adventures must not be evil in nature or goals.
16. Knights of the order may never go back on or break an oath or word of honor.
17. Knights of the order may choose to serve in a castle of the order, or they may adventure to further the goals of the order and lawful-good alignment.
18. Knights of the order must take a solemn oath to uphold the laws of the order.

Benefits of an order

Knights of an order receive several benefits for faithful service. For every three years a knight spends in the order, he gains one point of charisma (to a maximum of +2 points). A knight in the order may have a +10% experience-point bonus when on a quest or mission for the order; private adventures by the character do not allow an experience bonus. The order also pays for all of the knight's food, normal equipment, and weapons, and purchases a war horse for him if his is slain. A knight is also assigned 1-4 squires (fighter- or cavalier-types of 0-3rd level) and 1-10 men-at-arms (all zero level) who travel with him even on private adventures and are paid for by the order. These retainers gain half the experience points of the knight (except men-at-arms who may not advance in level). Knights of the order are not allowed to build or own castles when they join the order, but are given free food and lodging for themselves, their assigned hirelings, and their good-aligned friends.

Training for level advancement is provided "free" within an order for lower-level knights and their retainers — so long as all tithes are promptly paid and a suitable teacher is available at the time. The tithe presented by characters who are wealthy from adventuring is usually sufficient to cover the needs of those characters and the needs of poorer knights and retainers as well.

Table 1 shows ways in which honor points may be earned, and Table 2 gives some of the benefits of high honor scores. The system of honor acquisition given in Table 1 is similar to the one found in *Oriental Adventures*, and it may be further expanded using the honor system on page 36 of that tome. A knight has a starting honor level of 20. If a knight's honor ever drops below zero, he immediately loses all benefits acquired from the order and is expelled from the order permanently. He also loses one level of experience due to disgrace and dishonor, and may be subject to an alignment change.

The knight's starting honor is, of course, gained when he is accepted into the order and knighted. The character also gets the honor of having "Sir" before his name. If a character fails in a challenge to gain admittance to an order, he must wait one month before trying again, though he cannot challenge any knight who defeated him in combat.

Tournaments are held at every chapter of an order. All who wish may participate. There are two main areas of combat for knights: jousting with lance and shield is the first, and a bloody melee in which 20-40 knights fight it out to the finish is the second. Knights of an order may participate in any tournament but may not fight other knights of the order except at chapter tournaments. [*The various articles on tournaments and jousting in DRAGON issue #118 are highly recommended.*]

Below is an example of an order of knights that can be used in a campaign as is or as a model for creating other orders of knights. [*See also the orders of knighthood from the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy Setting guidebook, pages 79-80*]. Player characters of the appropriate class and level may set up their own orders of knights as well.

The Order of the Star

Master: Sir John Phillips, 16th-level paladin.
Seneschal: Sir Edwin Ramsey, 13th-level fighter.
Marshal: Sir Gilbert Basc, 12th-level ranger.
High Officers: Sir Jay Frizten, 10th-level cavalier; Sir John Piers, 11th-level paladin; Sir George Sprat, 14th-level fighter; Sir Charlton Acres, 12th-level ranger; Sir Marc Jacques, 11th-level paladin; Sir David Westmore, 15th-level cavalier; Sir Thomas Cranston, 10th-level fighter; Sir

Harold Falst, 11th-level ranger; Sir Dimentrius Masinto, 13th-level paladin; Sir Guy Luvac, 10th-level fighter.

Castles: Southfield (Commander Sir David Westmore), Starpeak (Commander Sir Marc Jacques), Bracilot (Commander Sir Guy Luvac).

Knights: 225

Combined castle garrisons: 1,125

Coat of Arms: Blue star on white background.

Colors: Blue cloaks, white tunics with coat of arms.

Chapters: January 18th, July 2nd, November 28th.

Oath: I, a Knight of the Order of the Star, promise to uphold and obey all of the rules the Order has set forth. I will faithfully obey the Code of Chivalry and the Laws of Honor. I will love the Knights of the Order of the Star as my brothers. When called upon to lead troops into battle for the Order, I will respond quickly and to the best of my ability. If two Knights of the Order of the Star quarrel or fight, I will part them, and if I cannot part them, I will not help either of them. Finally, I pledge with all my heart to uphold, strengthen, and spread the Way of the Lawful and the Good.

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Guerber, H.A. *Myths and Legends Series: Middle Ages.* London: Braken Books, 1985.

Tuchman, Barbara W. *A Distant Mirror, The Calamitous 14th Century.* New York: Ballantine Books, 1978. Ω

Table 1
Methods of Gaining and Losing Honor

Destroying a major foe of the order: +10.
Completing a great quest: +5.
Fulfilling a major oath: +5.
Leading troops of the order into victorious battle: +5.
Successfully defending or taking a castle for the order: +5.
Gaining position of authority: +3.
Defeating a superior opponent of the same class: +2.
Aiding or protecting a weaker person: +1.
Defeating an evil monster: +1 per 2,000 xp value.*
Donating treasure to the poor: +1 per 1,000 gp value.
Marrying: +1.
Per year of membership in an order: +1.
Saving another's life while risking own: +1.
Winning in a personal challenge or tournament: +1 per joust or melee.
Losing in a personal challenge or tournament: −1 per joust or melee.
Being defeated in personal (nontournament) combat: −2.
Failing a quest for the order: −5.
Leading troops of the order into a lost battle: −5.
Losing a castle of the order to attack: −5.
Refusing a challenge: −5.
Injuring a fellow knight for petty reasons: −10.
Breaking a law of the order: −15.
Committing murder, robbery, or other felonies: −20 or more.**
Betraying the order or a lawful-good being: −30 or more.**

* Only gained if monster is fought one-on-one by knight.
** Depends on the nature of the offense.

Table 2
Benefits from Chivalrous Honor

Honor	Benefit
1-49	None
50+	Knight gains +1 (+5%) on NPC reaction rolls.*
65+	Knight gains a minor magical item from the order.
80+	Knight gains ability to *detect evil* as a paladin.**
90+	Knight gains a major magical item from the order.
100+	Knight is given a fief of land and all required hirelings by the order.***

* An additional +1 (+5%) bonus to NPC reaction rolls is gained for every 15 points of honor over 50 the knight possesses.
** This ability is granted by one or more lawful-good patron deities of the order, if it is particularly religious. Another benefit may be substituted here if desired.
*** This is gained even if the character is not yet of name level. See the notes on mid-level strongholds from "Feuds and Feudalism," page 16, DRAGON issue #117.

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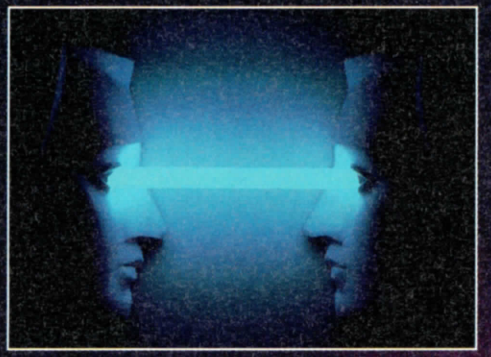

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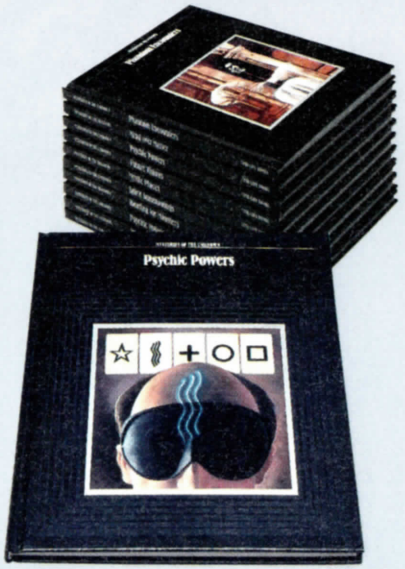

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Meanwhile, Back at the Fief . . .

Feudal lords have a lot to keep them busy

by Thomas M. Kane

Land is power. All wealth comes from the earth, be it grain, spice, furs, or gold. Most characters want to develop property, and the richer and more famous a PC becomes, the better a stronghold looks. In a feudal society such as in most AD&D® game worlds, people are governed by the property-owning class, and the master of a stronghold is a powerful figure. But power brings enemies. Maintaining a freehold provides as many adventures as a dungeon — if not more.

When PCs reach high levels, it is hard to challenge them. They have the resources to defeat most monsters easily, yet the DM cannot always use overwhelmingly powerful enemies. If the PCs develop land, many new scenarios are possible. Politics and wars occupy the characters. Money can be hauled out and put to use in building a castle or maintaining a town, the costs of which far exceed any other expenses PCs might have. Thus, development of land is good for game balance. The process of clearing wilderness land is detailed in the *DMG*, page 93. Information on obtaining strongholds in civilized lands is found in "The Care of Castles," by Katharine Kerr, reprinted in the Best of DRAGON Magazine Anthology volume 4. That article also gives invaluable information on staffing and running a castle. But there has been little information on adventuring *after* a castle is built.

Maintaining a populace

A land-holding PC constantly struggles to gain citizens. More people mean more workers for whatever industry dominates the area. The *DMG* states that when random encounter tables indicate potentially friendly creatures, such creatures remain in the PC's fiefdom. Few overlords will be satisfied with this source of population. A new landholder will probably want lots of peasantry. Katherine Kerr, in "The Care of Castles," describes a process for obtaining such people. Peasants must be offered a better situation than they currently enjoy. In addition, their former lord must be dealt with. He will only allow 10-15% of his peasants to leave. The PC must also pay him for them, at a rate agreeable to both characters. Such negotiations can draw PCs into political scenarios. The former lord may want military alliances, and his councillors may oppose the PC. Physically moving new citizens to a PC's land is difficult, as they must be fed and defended from monsters. PCs with an established estate may trade citizens to other nobles. [*See "Armies From the Ground Up" in this issue for more infor-*

mation on population growth.]

A PC will want artisans in his freehold. A landholder must travel to other cities in order to find craftsmen. The DM can use the process for finding henchmen to determine how many citizens are attracted (see page 35, *DMG*). For every 10% level of effectiveness for a certain method, one NPC will be located that year; thus, if a character posts notices in some town, 1-4 citizens are found. These citizens are tradesmen from the Expert Hirelings Table on page 29 of the *DMG*, not true henchmen or servitors of the PC. They may be hired normally, but otherwise they merely do business in the area of the PC's fief. Some NPC rulers may be displeased with advertisements luring citizens away from their town — another source of trouble. Each NPC attracted brings 1d12 − 2 relatives. If a fiefdom is maintained over time, its citizens reproduce, doubling the population every 21 years or so.

An overlord's most important task is to rule his people. The DM should determine a morale score for a fiefdom's citizens. The normal morale system, given on page 36 of the *DMG*, may be used. Obviously, modifiers for training or status level, enlistment or association, and pay or treasure shared do not apply. A set of special modifiers is given in Table 1.

Morale is a useful tool. Checks may be used to determine if laws are obeyed, if the population flees in times of disaster, or if people revolt against their lord. Morale can answer almost any question of governing. It may be necessary to compute different morale scores for different parts of the population; a PC may have happy peasants and a dissatisfied middle class. In civil wars, such divided loyalty creates exciting intrigue. It is important to know the morale of citizens of NPC lords, as the PCs may wish to spark rebellion in other lands. For a small populace (a few hundred people), a single morale score may suffice.

Under feudal law, a lord is not the equivalent of a modern dictator. Each class of society is bound by rights and obligations. Some are born to rule; others to feed the rulers. Both positions are honorable. The DM should emphasize this if the PCs demand unnatural services from their citizens, keeping the PCs from getting unlimited free help from their subjects.

A ruler must support his citizens. If disaster impoverishes a freehold, the ruler is expected to help all its inhabitants. He must pay at least half of the price for any rebuilding. For every citizen killed, the surviving family expects 10 sp. Maimed persons drain 1 sp each per year thereafter. If subjects are not supported, they have no obligation to their lord, and they then rebel or leave. PCs who ignore this duty must be prepared to deal with revolutions, crime, and banditry.

Making money

Some property is better than others. A PC who controls rich gold mines usually makes more money than one who rules a barren hillside. Landholders have to bargain and bully, and sometimes fight wars, to get better property. The DM must decide what resources are available in an area. The *Players Handbook* lists a landholder's income per inhabitant where it describes appropriate character classes. By raising taxes, a PC can generate more money. As much as 150% of the normal revenue can be so collected. However, normal medieval taxes were incredibly high. If a PC attempts to raise them, a morale check must be made each year. Furthermore, various penalties will apply. Should morale fail, a revolt will occur immediately. It is possible for a PC to enter several different ventures. If this occurs, compute each income separately. [*"Armies From the Ground Up" has another system for tax calculations.*]

A piece of land will support only a limited number of people. Under medieval conditions, about seven families can farm a one-mile hexagon. Only three herdsmen operate in a one-mile hex. Furthermore, only cleared land can be used. Other resources are also limited; the DM must decide on the size and location of ore veins, fresh water, etc. Each product must have a market as well, so a way must be found to get the goods to customers.

A market ratio is shown on Table 2. Multiply this figure by the number of workers engaged in a given work. This is the number of people who must be available to support a particular industry. For example, if 500 people mine iron, the market is 500 x 10; to make money, the ruler must find a way to transport the iron to an area where 5,000 people live. The miners will buy iron goods, so only 4,500 other people must be found.

Each sort of industry has a different rate of profit — and chances of failure or unexpected success. Failure is checked for first. When a venture fails, there is no roll for bonuses that year; Table 2 describes these chances. The adjustment to income is added to or subtracted from the normal income described in the *Players Handbook*. Thus, a fighter with 1,000 subjects normally receives 350 gp per year. If his castle controls a rich trade route, he gets 50% more, or 525 gp per year. There is a chance that his income fails or that he gets an extra bonus. The effects of success or failure are described below.

If an industry fails, only half the normal income is collected. No bonuses are allowed, although penalties are still exacted. The morale penalty for a poor year is subtracted. The DM may determine the cause of failures or bonuses. Farms may suffer droughts, trade may be cut off by hostile monsters, or dreadful rumors may depress the workers. Failure may also be due to economics. An overabundance of a given product can ruin a PC's profits. Given the above, business can easily lead to adventures. The PCs can try to right these matters: destroying the monsters or finding a new market for the product. The DM must decide on exact details.

If there is a bonus, the character collects double his normal income. This could be due to high production, good news, or good market conditions. The morale modifier for a prosperous year may be applied.

A vital factor in economics, medieval or modern, is how much of a market a given interest controls. PCs will engage in heated diplomacy to control resources. If a person or cartel controls an industry, it can reduce the chances of failure and raise chances of success. For every 10% of an industry a group owns, its chance of failure is reduced 10%, and 10% is added to the chance of success. The chance of failure may never be lower than 5%, and the chance of success may never be above 60%. A PC may embargo enemy powers. For every 10% of a market held by the embargoing power, the price can be raised 20%. Thus, if dwarves control 50% of all base metals and declare an embargo, the prices of all metal goods double. Should some power embargo food, famine may occur. During an embargo, the embargoing power must check twice for failure. If either check results in income loss, the loss occurs.

A power that controls a product can also flood the market, lowering its prices. In this event, the percentage of the market controlled by the flooding power is added to the chance for the product's failure everywhere. This can be useful for ruining enemies, but the forces who are lowering the price must also suffer the penalty. It is not as difficult as it seems for a DM to determine how much of a market a PC controls. Trade was limited in the Middle Ages, and only extremely valuable, rare, and nonessential substances were imported from great distances. Thus, only a few nations need be detailed. It was common for medieval rulers to establish monopolies in their kingdoms. All sales of a given good were controlled. Trade guilds also attempted to seize markets in order to defend themselves against nobles.

International relations

By now it is obvious that a PC lord will not be independent. For citizens, money, resources, and security, all rulers must deal with other powers. These might not

be other countries. Trade guilds must be dealt with, and churches may formally negotiate with nobles. Nationalism was unknown in early times, so people may shift between rulers without qualms. (Note that the PC may have purchased serfs to till his lands.) For the same reason, a ruler cannot always count on the support of his people. Wars, economic actions, and diplomacy occur along church, business, or international lines with equal ease. Diplomacy is expensive. Other nobles must be entertained, and tribute must be paid.

A fantasy-world diplomat is usually personally involved in bargaining. Friendship and individual alignment may make a difference, but horrible acts of treachery occurred in the Middle Ages. For fear of this, parleys were often held on bridges with a barrier in the center; this prevented one ambassador from kidnapping the other. If a foreign power has no reason to support a treaty, it will break it.

The DM must carefully role-play other nobles. Power plays and intrigue are exciting. If a PC demands respect, and can back up interests with force, he is likely to get what he wants.

Only the DM can describe the international situation in his milieu. Small, new powers are likely to spread war in hopes of increasing their power. Larger nations will protect the status quo. When several powerful lands contend for the same area, they will probably have some sort of balance of power. If the balance is damaged, the nations will fight. Powers which defend the status quo often become balancers, allying first with one power, then another, in order to prevent war. No nation wants any neighbor to become too powerful. For this reason, countries seldom cooperate completely. In the Middle Ages, nations often signed treaties with many powers. It was not uncommon for there to be conditions under which a noble would fight for one side, and conditions that would make him support the other. Many alliances obviously had to be kept quite secret!

Monsters and disasters

There are worse things than war to trouble a noble. In a fantasy world, there are monsters and malevolent wizards to deal with. Monster incursions are covered in the *DMG*, on page 93. The lord should not be informed of an incursion unless he would have some way of knowing about it. Some creatures immediately begin to wreak havoc; others infiltrate a fiefdom and subvert peasants. Undead and lycanthropes must be feared. If they are not rooted out and killed, the PC may find that his entire populace has become an army of monsters. Magic-users or creatures which can *charm* people present a similar problem. A PC may lead inquisitions, but there will certainly be morale penalties if innocent people are regularly tortured or killed. Good characters must avoid such excesses.

Natural disasters make excellent scenarios. A table is needed to see when they occur. Of course, the DM is not bound by the dice. If a disaster would spoil some other adventure, it need not happen; if the DM wants one to occur, he need not wait until the dice indicate it. The table below describes natural disasters after the manner of the yearly and monthly events tables in *Oriental Adventures*, pages 107-113. A maximum of 0-2 events occur each year. Roll 1d4 − 2; if the result is zero or less, no events occur. An event occurs 1-12 game months from the "time" of the dice roll. For every 20% of the population killed by a disaster, morale drops by 5%.

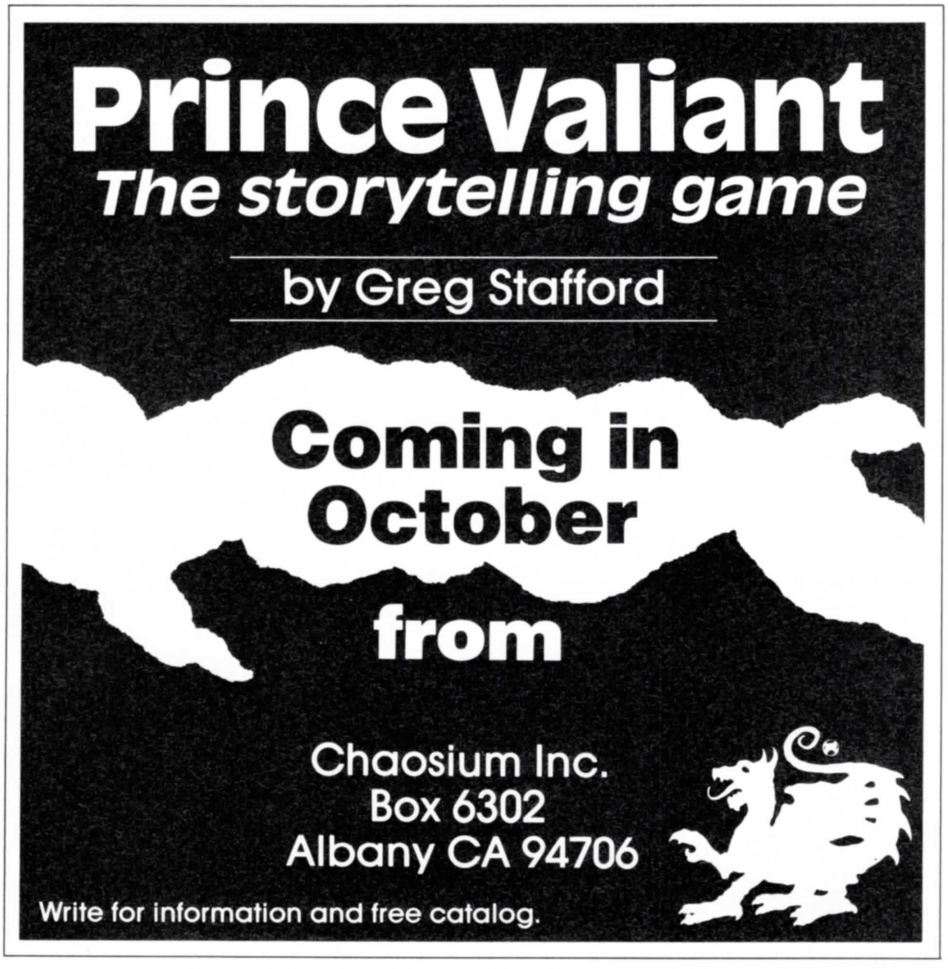
Table 3 results

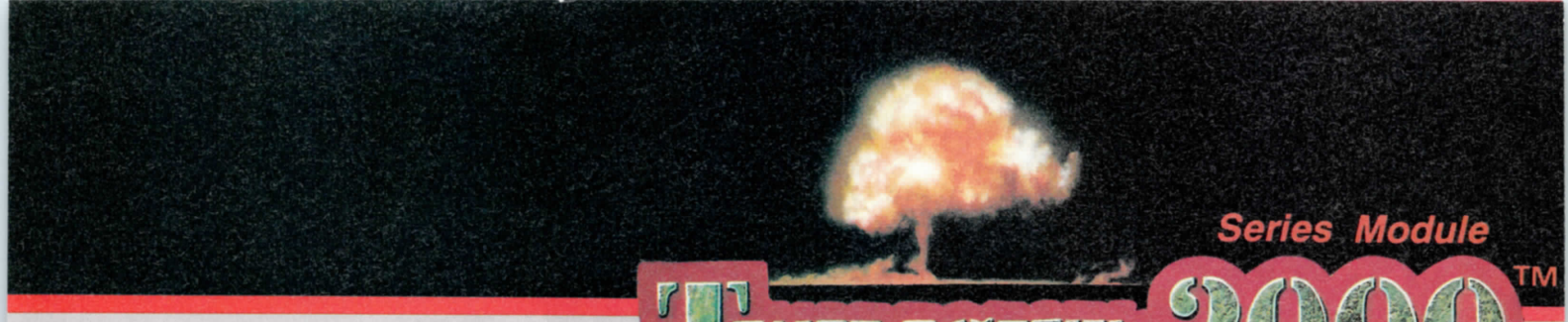
Comet. An especially bright comet is sighted. Most astrologers and sages see it as a portent, and the local citizens are either encouraged or frightened by the event, checking morale with a −20% penalty. If morale fails, lower morale 10%. If it succeeds, improve it 10%. Optionally, the DM may use this event to foretell a major adventure. Instead of a comet, this event may be an eclipse, meteor shower, or other astrological feature.

Extreme weather. Depending on the season, this could be a heat wave, a blizzard, a drought, or an overpowering rain. Add 30% to the chance of failure for any farm. The weather may affect PCs as well. Bruce Humphrey's article "The Role of Nature," in DRAGON issue #108, discussed extreme weather conditions.

Famine. Food becomes scarce for 2-7 months. Each month, 5% of the population starves to death. Food costs 100 times the normal price! The PC receives no income from farms, and there is a 20% chance of a plague (see below). PCs may stockpile grain against such an event. The prices for normal rations in the *Players Handbook* may be used in times of plenty. Each year, 2-40% of all stored grain will rot, though the use of magic may alleviate this. If food was stored, or if clerics can create it, the PC may decide how it is given out. If it is not distributed evenly, there will certainly be morale checks and penalties.

Flood. Waters in any nearby large body





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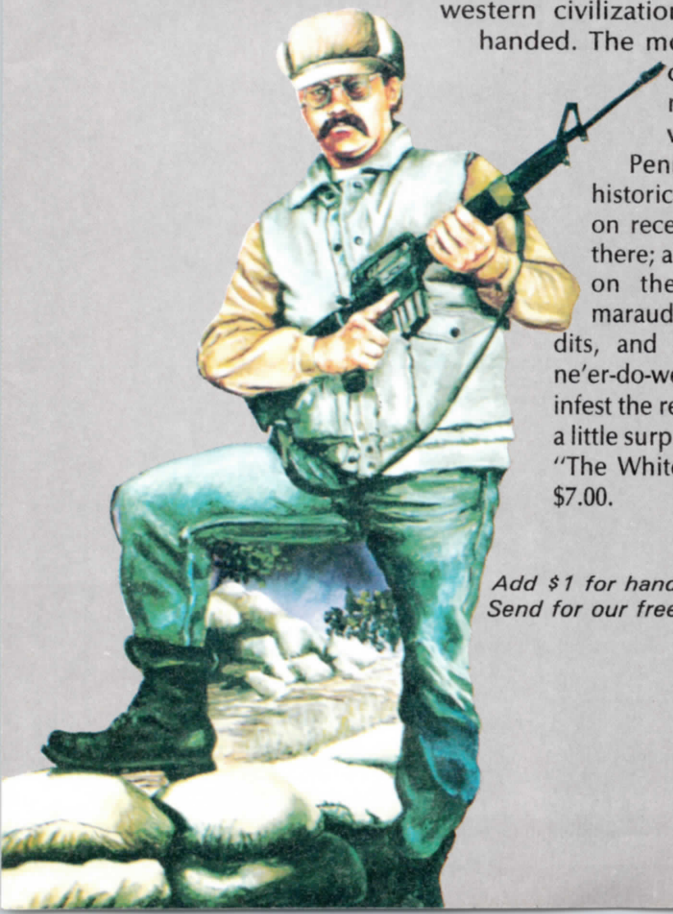

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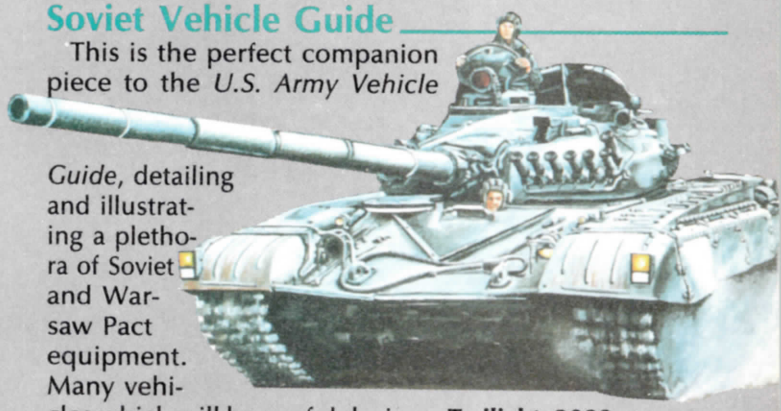

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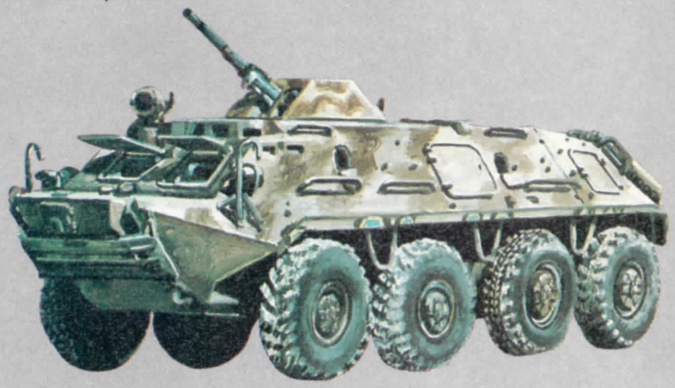

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of water rise 5-30'. The impending flood is obvious 2-5 days in advance. The PC loses 1-10% of his population and 50-80% (1d20+50) of any farm income. There is a 20% chance of plague and 20-40% chance of a famine. Buildings in the flood waters lose 1-6 structural points. All prices are doubled for 2-5 months.

Table 1
Modifiers to Population Morale

Condition	Result
Ruler is a local hero	+15%
Year is prosperous	+15%
Citizens are noble*	+10%
Special gifts distributed**	+10%
Festival***	+10%
Citizens own their land*	+5%
Citizens are gentry*	+5%
Citizens are freemen*	—
Citizens are peasants*	−5%
Citizens are serfs*	−10%
Ruler behaves improperly****	−10%
Serfs or peasants oppressed*	−10%
Year is poor	−10%
Gentry or nobles oppressed*	−15%
Citizens are slaves*	−20%
Middle class oppressed*	−25%*****

* This modifier may only apply to a portion of the total population, so a fractional proportion of this figure may be used as a modifier (e.g., if 50% of the citizens are slaves, the total modifier for that part of the populace is −10%).
** This includes any benefit the ruler gives to a large segment of the population. Presents must be worth at least 5 sp per citizen. This modifier could apply when the PC has performed a popular act, such as capturing a notorious bandit or expelling a hated general.
*** This applies for 1-12 months after the festival. To qualify for this bonus, the PC must sponsor a celebration that costs large sums of money. If the DM has no details on the price, assume that it requires 100-10,000 (d100 × 100) gp. Religious ceremonies, knightings, and celebrations of heroes are typical festival occasions. This modifier is cumulative twice, so a maximum of +20% is gained from festivals.
**** Improper behavior covers a variety of ignoble acts. Association with the wrong social class, impious religious behavior, or failure to observe local customs are examples.
***** Interestingly enough, it is more dangerous to offend the bourgeoisie than any other class of society. Nobles fear upsets in the current situation. Peasants and serfs usually accept oppression. But when tradesmen and free people are hurt, they often rise up in revolution.

Table 2
Player Character Ruler Income

Industry	Adjustment to income	Chance of failure	Chance of bonus	Market ratio
Animal herds	+10%	10%	15%	0.2
Craft work*	+25%	30%	15%	2
Farm, arable	none	25%	20%	0.15
Farm, poor**	−25%	40%	5%	0.1
Fishing	none	20%	15%	0.2
Lumber/quarry	−10%	10%	5%	1
Mercenaries	***	***	***	***
Metal	+10%	25%	15%	10
Precious metal	+50%	20%	30%	20
Rare animal	+10%	35%	35%	20
Rare herb/spice	+25%	25%	20%	15
Trade	+50%	40%	40%	100
Water (desert)	+10%	10%	5%	100

* This includes any manufactured item. Rugs, ships, metal goods, magical devices, and artwork all apply.
** A failure on poor farmland results in famine (see text).
*** The use of mercenaries is generally covered in DRAGON issue #109, "Fighters For a Price." The DM should work out details if the PC ruler wishes to field his own mercenary force.

Table 3
Natural Disasters and Events

	Terrain			
Event	Normal	Coast	Plain	River
Comet	01−10	01-10	01-10	01-10
Extreme weather	11-26	11-17	11-30	11-22
Famine*	27-41	18-23	31-34	23-27
Flood	42-52	24-44	35-40	28-53
Geologic**	53-63	45-54	41-50	54-64
Hurricane	64-74	55-75	51-84	65-75
Lightning	75	76	85	76
Plague	76-95	77-88	86-95	77-95
Tidal wave	—	89-95	—	—
Fire	96-00	96-00	96-00	96-00

* This situation may result from war-related sieges or when there is an income failure on poor farmland (see text).
** Roll on Table 4 for geologic disasters.

Table 4
Geologic Disasters

	Terrain			
Event	Hills/fault	Hills/no fault	Flat/fault	Flat/no fault
Earthquake	01-20	01-05	01-50	01-05
Mud slide	21-50	06-16	—	—
Rock slide	51-60	17-27	—	—
Avalanche	61-70	28-38	—	—
Volcano	71-90	39-54	51-56	06
Roll again*	91-95	55-80	57-70	07-40
No event	96-00	81-00	71-00	41-00

* Roll for new disaster on Table 3.

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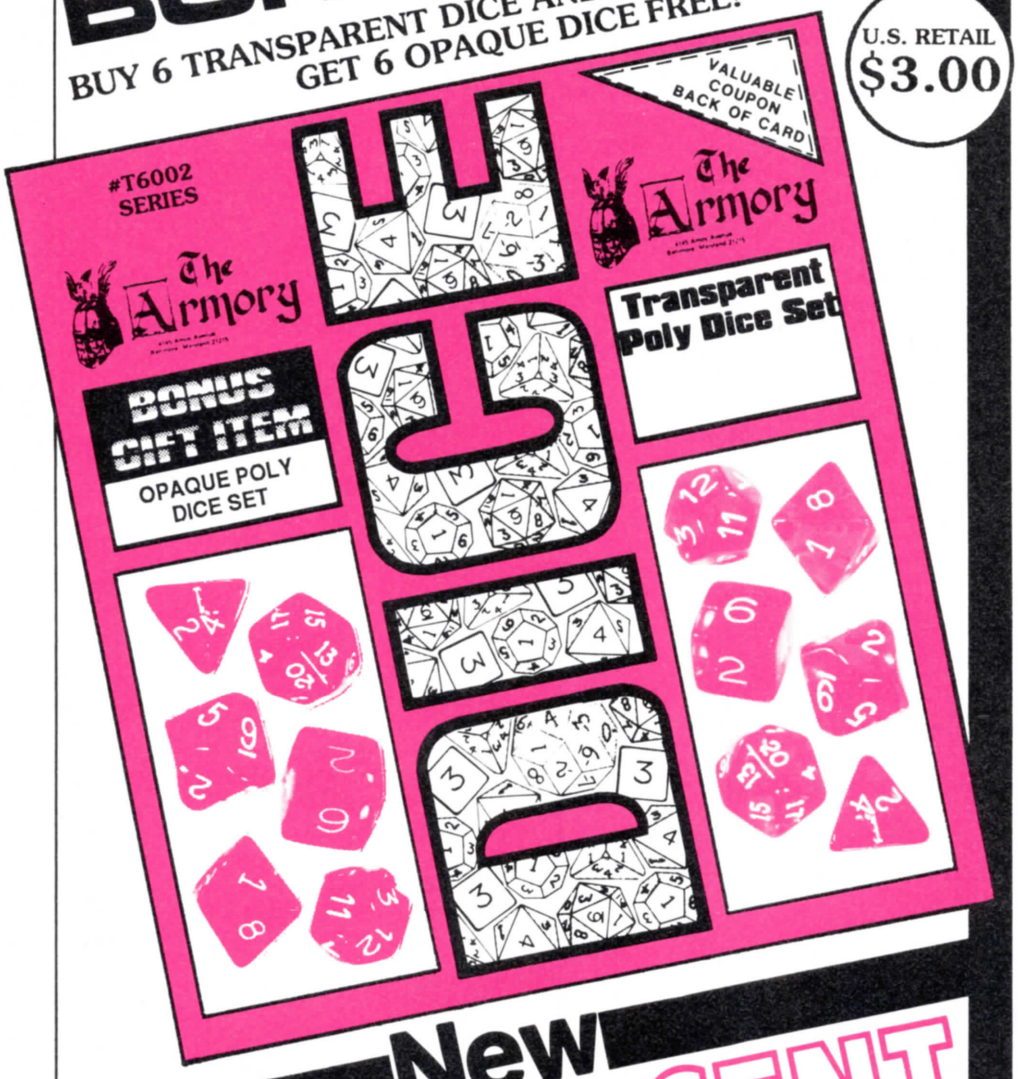

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Table 4 results

Earthquake. Treat as the spell, but affecting an area 10-1,000 miles in diameter.

Mud slide, rock slide, and avalanche. There is a 70% chance that an avalanche hits a building, and a 90% chance that it blocks a road. Avalanches do 1-10 hp structural damage, are 40% likely to strike a building, and are 80% likely to block a road. Mud slides hit buildings 80% of the time and roads 95%; they do 2-12 structural points damage. All blocked roads require 2-5 days to clear. In any slide, 1d20 − 8 people are killed.

Volcano. If a volcano is in the area, it erupts. Otherwise, a new volcano forms. An earthquake occurs (as noted above) within a half-mile radius of the volcano. All creatures within 200 yards of the eruption lose 6d10 hp damage from the explosion. Ash buries all areas within 10 miles 1-10′ deep. Lava flows are 10-100′ wide, and they travel at a speed of 2-12″. They lose 1″ of speed every quarter-mile they travel. If a lava flow hits a building, the structure is ruined.

Hurricane. A great storm sweeps the land within 500 miles of the ocean coasts. The PC loses 5% of his population, and all buildings lose 2-20 structural points. Further inland, this result indicates tornadoes. Each building has a 50% chance of being hit by a twister for 3-24 hp structural damage. The PC loses 1-6% of his subjects.

Lightning. Roll 1d100. On a roll of 01-80, a major building is hit by lightning; on a roll of 81-90, an NPC is struck; and, on a roll of 91-00, a PC is hit. Lightning does from 3d6 to 6d6 hp damage. If this is 50% or more of the victim's hit points, he loses a point of constitution. Should the character fail to save vs. paralyzation, he is stunned for 1-4 rounds and is affected as if by a *forget* spell. Wooden buildings lose 1-3 structural points when hit by lightning and must save vs. lightning or catch fire. Stone is not affected.

Plague. The DM should select a disease appropriate to the campaign area from the table on page 14 of the *DMG.* Severity is rolled separately for each victim. All PCs in the area have a 40% chance of contracting the disease. If they contact infected persons, this chance rises to 60%. NPCs from other lands refuse to enter the area, and all prices double. The plague lasts from 2-12 months. Each month, 5% of the population catches the disease and suffers from its effects.

Tidal wave. A seismic wave sweeps the coasts. It is 10-40′ high and comes 100 yards inland for every 10′ of its height, though this reduces the wave's height by 10′. Each 10′ of inland elevation reduces the wave's height by 10′. Buildings lose 2-12 structural points for every 10′ of wave height when the wave hits them. The PC loses 10-80% of his population without prior warning. There is a 10% chance of a plague after a tidal wave. For 1-2 months, the price of building materials triples, and all other prices double.

Fire. This will be a forest or grass fire in the wilderness, or a building fire in urban areas. In the city, from 50-80% of the local (inflammable) buildings burn. Property of the PCs has a chance to be burnt equal to the percent of the city that is ruined. Stone buildings are not destroyed, but all combustibles inside them are. The city loses 10-40% of its people. There is a 20% chance of plague and a 10% chance of famine. For four months, the price of building materials is 10 times normal. The price of food doubles for one month.

In the wilderness, a grass or forest fire begins. The DM needs some sort of weather table in this event. Grass fires move as fast as the wind; forest fires move at half that speed. A fire begins 1-100′ wide, and it gains 10′ each hour of burning. A wildfire meanders about for days or weeks until rain falls or it is put out. Any building in the area of a wildfire burns. Characters take 2d4 hp damage per round from grass fires and 2d6 hp damage from forest fires. Grass fires burn in one area for 10 minutes. Forest fires last for a full day in a single area. A wildfire prevents any income from farming if it reaches planted fields. Lumber is also destroyed.

Characters may attempt to surround wildfires and put them out. This requires one worker for every 100′ line of fire and gives an 80% chance per day to stop the fire. Each 10 MPH of wind speed reduces this chance 10%. As an interesting alternative, the DM could play out the fire fighting like a mass battle. A map could be used, and the PCs could position fire fighters while the DM outlines the path of the flame. If it is ringed by bare earth 100′ wide, the fire stops spreading. Spells like *cloudburst* may also help.

Summary

The details in this article apply to most fantasy game worlds. However, if you do not feel that they reflect your campaign, feel free to change them. The affairs of NPC rulers affect most characters, and natural disasters can provide adventure for anybody. Information on strongholds is useful, even if no PC has one — the NPCs are sure to own a few!

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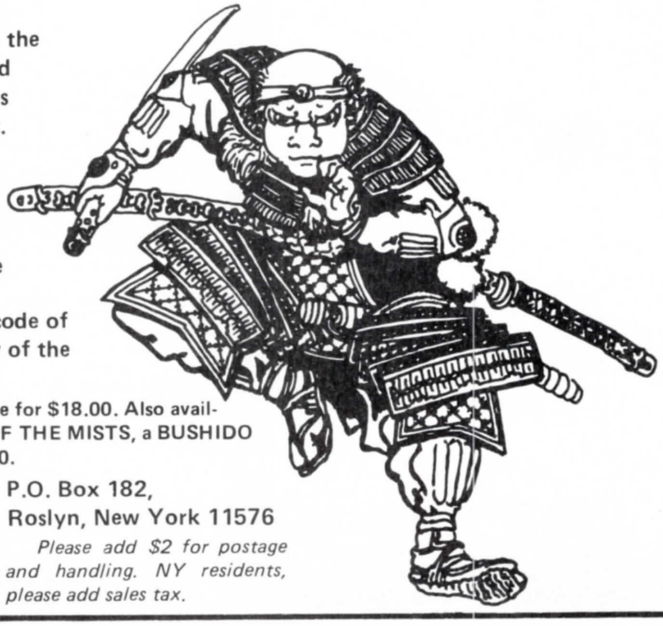

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Armies From the Ground Up

Taxes, politics, immigrants, and the military in AD&D® games

by James A. Yates

A lord's men-at-arms are really little more than a large, well-armed police force capable of maintaining order within the fief and of repelling most minor incursions, yet incapable of large-scale military operations. Since large standing armies are well beyond the financial means of most player characters or NPCs, a lord must call upon his loyal populace for support if any real threat to the freehold should emerge. How many of the freehold's loyal citizens turn out to aid their lord and how effective their support is must be determined by a number of factors which also play a part in determining the loyalty of those forces and their rate of growth.

Domestic and foreign policies

How a lord treats his people and neighbors has a great bearing upon his success at creating an army. For the purposes of this article, there are four generalized domestic and foreign policies into which most lords can be categorized: belligerent aggressiveness, inactive complacency, active complacency, and progressive con-

solidation. Each policy has a particular influence upon the loyalty of the lord's followers and the growth of the freehold's population.

Belligerent aggressiveness is the normal policy of a ruthless and ambitious lord — the type who seeks to extend his power as far and as quickly as possible, regardless of the consequences. Open warfare with its neighbors and oppression at home are the hallmarks of such a regime. The military is all that matters, and little money is left for anything else. Loyalty to such a lord usually stems from fear, and many residents of the freehold are reluctant to fight for such a person. Adventurers and mercenaries might be attracted to such a freehold, but not many settlers.

Passive complacency is a lack of any real policy. The lord maintains just enough troops to secure his position of power and leaves the inhabitants of the freehold more or less to their own devices. Many residences of the freehold thus feel no loyalty at all towards this sort of lord and do not quickly rally to his support in time of need. Immigrants looking for a quiet place to settle might be attracted to such a freehold.

Active complacency is the policy of a lord who enjoys the status quo. The military is maintained at a level capable of ensuring the security of the entire freehold. Relations with neighbors are cordial, and just enough is done for the citizenry to prevent complaints. Very minor territorial acquisitions take place from time to time. New settlers are welcome here, but settlement is not actively encouraged. Loyalty of the inhabitants is moderate.

Progressive consolidation is a policy of internal improvement combined with a steady, gradual expansion of the freehold's boundaries. This expensive policy includes the construction of roads and bridges, schools, hospitals, etc. The military is made a top priority in order to give the lord the strength to back up his foreign policy, but not at the expense of all else. Territorial expansion rarely exceeds 5% of the total size of the freehold per year and is usually accomplished by peaceful means. There is much in such a freehold to attract new settlers; the inhabitants readily support such a lord.

Taxes and more taxes

Players Handbook (page 22) says that once a lord has established a freehold, he may then collect 7 sp per inhabitant per month in taxes. This is a flat rate and should be subject to change. Instead, a lord should choose from five tax policies:

The *oppressive* tax rate of 9 sp per month per inhabitant;

The *burdensome* tax rate of 8 sp per month per inhabitant;

The *conservative* tax rate of 7 sp per month per inhabitant;

The *liberal* tax rate of 6 sp per month per inhabitant; and,

The *progressive* tax rate of 5 sp per month per inhabitant.

Taxes are regarded as the bane of all the inhabitants of a freehold, and the amount of taxes the inhabitants are forced to pay influences their loyalty. The inhabitants of a freehold are far less likely to rally behind a lord who steals the gold from their teeth than they would a lord who allows them to actually get ahead in life. By the same token, would-be immigrants are much more likely to be attracted to a freehold with a low tax rate than to one with a high tax rate.

What does it mean?

These policies and tax rates help determine the size of any auxiliary forces a lord might organize and the amount of those forces that actually show up to fight for that lord. They also help determine the number of new settlers attracted to the freehold each year. This latter subject is discussed later.

There are four basic types of auxiliary forces a lord can have: a fyrd, a militia, a yeomanry, and mercenaries. The size and quality of these forces are decided by population and the will of the lord, but the percentage of them who actually fight are heavily influenced by the lord's policies. For each type of auxiliary force except mercenaries, there is a range of percentages representing the amount of those forces who turn out for battle when called upon. Some always find an excuse for staying away; how many do so is determined by applying the following die roll modifications:

Domestic and foreign policy modifications:
- Belligerent aggressiveness = +2%
- Inactive complacency = −5%
- Active complacency = 0%
- Progressive consolidation = +10%

Tax policy modifications:
- Oppressive = −10%
- Burdensome = −5%
- Conservative = 0%
- Liberal = +2%
- Progressive = +5%

No policy modifications can ever cause a result less than 1%. Should they result in a figure higher than 100%, it is treated as 100%. No policy lasts forever, and a lord is entitled to change any policy at the beginning of each new year. A militaristic lord might lower taxes to lure new settlers to his freehold, to build up its population in anticipation of some future conflict. Then, too, a generous lord who needs funds for some worthwhile project may demand a temporary tax increase to help pay for it. And an overly ambitious lord who loses half his army in an ill-advised adventure might quickly decide upon a policy of inactive complacency.

The fyrd

The most economical (it costs nothing) auxiliary force a lord can have is the fyrd. This basically consists of calling upon every able-bodied man to gather in defense of the freehold in times of peril. The fyrd is the choice of lords who either don't want the bother and expense of outfitting and training auxiliary forces, or who don't trust their "loyal" citizens with weapons.

When summoned, the fyrd consists almost entirely of farmers and villagers with little or no armor, few weapons (farm implements form most of the pole arms), and even less training. No matter how loyal the peasants might be, the effectiveness of the fyrd is only fair at best, due to its lack of military experience and equipment. The fyrd has another disadvantage in that the lord cannot afford to keep it in the field for long without bankrupting himself and ruining the economy of the freehold.

The only advantage of the fyrd is its size; it is the largest type of auxiliary force. To determine the actual size of the fyrd, the DM must generate the population of the freehold (which is also necessary to determine the taxes collected). The basic fyrd consists of 30% of the entire population of the freehold and represents every male of military age (18-45 years). The fyrd can be increased by increments of 2% up to a maximum of 40% at the lord's option. Each 2% increase expands the military age group by one year at the bottom and three years at the top, so that a fyrd of 32% would include every male between the age of 17 and 48. At 34%, the military age would be 16-51, and so on to the maximum of 13-60 at 40%.

When the fyrd is summoned, the lord designates a place where it musters (usually his stronghold). The fyrd can be mustered in 3-12 days, depending upon the size of the freehold. The lord can expect 60-85% (55 + 5d6) of the fyrd to answer the call. The result is then modified by the lord's domestic and foreign policies and tax rate to determine the final percentage (45-100%) of the fyrd that shows up to fight for the lord.

Example: A small freehold has a base population of 3,100. The lord decides upon a fyrd of 32%, resulting in a total of 992 males between the ages of 17-48 who can turn out to defend the freehold. It is determined that 72% of the fyrd answer the call when summoned. The lord has a policy of passive complacency which subtracts −5%, but his liberal tax rate adds +2%, for a final total of 69%. This means that 684 ill-equipped, untrained peasants show up to do or die for their lord.

The militia

The next step beyond the fyrd is the militia. The size of the militia is generally left to the will of the lord, since he is primarily responsible for its arms and training. Cost is the major factor in deciding the size of the militia; the more the lord is willing to spend on weapons and training, the larger the militia can be.

Assume that an average militia is about two or three times the size of the lord's men-at-arms force, although it could easily be larger or smaller. Militiamen are selected on the basis of age and health. The militiamen are instructed in the rudiments of weapon skills and military tactics. Periodically, units of the militia are called out to practice their weapon skills and to receive additional training. The frequency and thoroughness of these training sessions are solely dependent upon the willingness of the lord to pay for them.

The major part of any militia is infantry, usually spearmen. This basic troop type requires a minimum of training, and their weapons keep them from having to close with a well-trained enemy. Light troops, archers and other missile troops, and even militia cavalry units could be raised, depending on the circumstances.

Although a definite improvement over the rabble which forms a fyrd, the militia is still a fragile instrument. Its morale and effectiveness depend on its arms and training. Two drawbacks to it are that the lord cannot afford to keep the militia in the field for any length of time (as with a fyrd), and its weapons will usually be kept locked up in armories around the freehold until times of crisis. Most lords are not so trusting of their peasants as to allow them free use of arms, and the armories will become prime targets for any invader.

When called out, the militia musters at its armories within two days, then converges on a location designated by the lord within 2-8 days, depending upon the size of the freehold. A base of 75-90% (70 + 5d4) of the militia responds, modified by the lord's domestic and foreign policy and tax rate. Armor is still a rarity, yet most men will have shields and adequate weapons. When mixed with units of regulars, most militia troops perform fairly well. If well-trained and ably led, a good militia unit can perform well on its own and even be trusted to hold a lord's stronghold while he is away with the regulars.

Example: A lord who rules a freehold in the forest has 2,400 subjects and 110 men-at-arms. With such a population, he could easily form a militia of 300 men. When called upon, 88% respond, which is modified by +2% for the lord's policy of belligerent aggressiveness and 0% for his conservative tax policy, resulting in a turnout of 90% — i.e., 270 fairly reliable troops.

One final word about militias. As the freehold grows in size, hamlets, villages, and towns will spring up. In time (if the lord permits it), these communities will organize their own watches and militias, which can be used to augment or even replace the lord's militia. Many watches will contain large numbers of hired mercenaries and may even be of superior quality than the lord's militia. Although such militias would ease the strain on the lord's purse, they could prove to be a threat to his authority if they become too powerful.

The yeomanry

Perhaps the best auxiliary force a lord can have is a yeomanry. Only lords of good alignments normally develop a yeomanry, because doing so entails entrusting large numbers of the citizenry with their own arms and armor. The yeomanry is also the most expensive auxiliary force aside from mercenaries, but they make up for this by being efficient and reliable auxiliaries.

In forming a yeomanry, the lord sets up a special class of citizen within the freehold. The yeoman is part of the middle class of land owners, merchants, etc. Yeomen are expensive because the lord must supply them with some type of armor and weapons and see to their military training. The lord must also grant them other concessions as determined by the DM, most often including a sizeable cut in taxes. In exchange, the yeomen are pledged to defend the freehold in time of need and to answer the lord's call for troops at any time.

The yeomen themselves are not overly numerous and seldom number more than 1½ times the number of the lord's men at arms. However, each yeoman is required to train and equip three of his fellows (relatives, friends, neighbors, employees, or servants) to fight with him. Delegating this authority and responsibility to the yeoman is the beginning of feudalism. After the initial outlay of funds, all of the lord has to do is cut the taxes of the yeomanry and hold them in high esteem to assure himself of having a large, well-trained force of auxiliaries.

Most yeomen are good troops, many equal to regulars and a few even superior to them. The yeomen's retainers are on the par of a good militia, and morale is high all around. Yeomen and their retainers have their arms and equipment handy at all times and have much more opportunity to practice their weapon skills. Many yeomen are actually retired men-at-arms or even retired adventurers with arms and armor of their own. When determining the size of the yeomanry, figure that 6-12% (4 + 2d4) are retired men-at-arms and 2-5% (1 + d4) are retired adventurers (usually fighters) of 1st-3rd level. These retired types form the officers and sergeants of the yeomanry, and retired adventurers have normal chances for having magical items.

A lord who calls a yeomanry can expect 80-95% (75 + 5d4) of his force to answer the summons. This figure is modified by the lord's domestic and foreign policy and tax rate (even though the yeomen have fewer taxes than most other residents of the freehold). If the freehold is actually in danger, each yeoman arrives with all three of his retainers; if the lord simply wants more troops for some purpose, each yeoman shows up with only one retainer. This allows the yeomen to remain on extended service (up to six months and even beyond the borders of the freehold) without ruining their farms or businesses. It takes the yeomanry 3-8 days (2 + 1d6) to muster at any point in the freehold, depending upon the freehold's size.

All yeomen have shields, armor, and ample weaponry. Most also have leather

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armor, and some use ring mail, chain mail, or even plate mail. Their retainers have less protection, although most have shields and some may have some form of armor. The retainers are armed much as are the yeomen. Most yeomen are infantry, but nothing prevents them from being cavalry.

Example: A lord resides in a hilly freehold with 4,100 inhabitants and 100 men-at-arms. He has organized a yeomanry of 120 men. In time of need, the lord calls out the yeomanry and 91% of them answer the call. This is modified by +10% for his policy of progressive consolidation and another +2% for his liberal tax rate, for a total of 103% (100%). All 120 of the yeomen answer the call. Of these, 8% (10) of them are retired men-at-arms and 3% (four) of them are former adventurers of 1st-3rd level. If the freehold was in danger, the yeomen would have brought 360 retainers in all; if the lord wanted to attack a hostile neighbor, only 120 retainers would have been brought along.

As the freehold expands, the yeomanry will be the main source of new leadership — the hetmen, burgomasters, mayors, sheriffs, and constables of the future. If the lord is ambitious, brave, brilliant, and lucky, and the freehold develops into something more substantial, the yeomanry offers the greatest number of candidates for knighthood and the new nobility. As with the more advanced militias, the lord had best handle the yeomanry properly, lest they become a threat to his own position.

The fyrd, militia, and yeomanry are not mutually exclusive; a lord could have a yeomanry and still maintain the fyrd as a last resort in times of extreme peril to the freehold. DMs and players must use a bit of common sense when organizing a militia or yeomanry. If a lord has 150 men-at-arms but only 1,200 inhabitants in his freehold, there is no way he can have a militia of 500 men, or 180 yeomen with three retainers each. Make the auxiliaries as large as you wish but keep them real.

Mercenaries

The last method of augmenting a lord's men-at-arms is by hiring mercenaries. Mercenary troops can vary in quality from fair to outstanding and in loyalty from unscrupulous to fanatical. Hired soldiers require special care and handling, as their primary motivating force is money. A lord should carefully think through all the pros and cons before hiring any mercenaries.

Generally, a lord should never hire mercenaries totalling more than 50% of his men-at-arms; a figure of 30% or even 20% would be advisable. Men-at-arms in the lord's stronghold should always outnumber any mercenaries there by at least 2-to-1. No vital positions be garrisoned solely by mercenaries. A large mercenary force can be a dagger which ambitious lieutenants, wealthy enemies, and slighted officers might turn against a lord's throat.

This is not to say that all mercenaries can't be trusted. If well-paid and properly treated, many mercenaries can be just as loyal as a lord's own men-at-arms. The longer the terms of a mercenary's service, the stronger the bond between him and his lord. Many other factors help determine the loyalty of mercenaries: racial or political ties, the nature of the cause, and so on. An evil lord hiring a unit of bugbears to aid in an attack on another freehold must rule them with an iron hand and watch them like a hawk; a good lord who hires a band of dwarven mercenaries to help stamp out a tribe of pesky orcs can rely on them to give their all without hesitation. A lord had better understand the nature of the mercenaries he is hiring.

Nonhuman auxiliaries

Demi-human and half-orc lords use a somewhat different system for auxiliaries. For example, the dwarven troops of a mountain dwarf and the orcish contingent of an evil half-orc represent the best troops drawn from any clans or tribes which reside within the freehold. The remainder is organized by the tribes and clans themselves. In times of crisis, a percentage equal to that of the yeomanry will respond to a demi-human lord's call; however, the actual number of troops summoned resembles that of the fyrd. These auxiliaries are very powerful, consisting of fighters or multiclassed fighters of 1st level or higher or 1 HD orcs.

One ticklish problem that might arise is that concerning the disposition of substantial numbers of demi-humans or humanoids who live in a human lord's freehold. The lord must have come to some sort of understanding with these nonhumans, or they would have been driven out as hostile creatures. Some might work as special scouts (see DRAGON® issue #99, "Tables and tables of troops") and be considered as some sort of tribute to the lord (taxes and any other tribute will have to be worked out by the DM and any players involved). This situation might also arise in a freehold of a demi-human lord with many humans residing in it.

In most circumstances, demi-humans or humanoids are organized along their standard racial lines. Exactly when their military power is used to assist their lord and how much of it is used depends on many factors. DMs and players must work out these details for themselves. Motivation is the key here; why should the wood elves help the human lord destroy his neighbor? What's in it for the kobolds to aid the half-orc against the invading dwarves?

Growth and expansion

Where does a lord go once he has cleared the desired amount of territory for a freehold, attracted men-at-arms, and organized auxiliary forces? Hired mercenaries can increase the lord's forces only so much and are often a two-edged sword. The only method of increasing a lord's forces with reliable troops is by an actual increase in the population of the freehold itself. This increase is accomplished in three ways: natural population growth, attraction of new settlers, and increases in the freehold's territory to encompass already inhabited areas.

Natural population growth is usually the single major factor that increases the size of a lord's forces. Barring some monumental catastrophe such as plague, famine, or war, the population of any given area will almost certainly grow from year to year. Alignment means nothing, for even under the most repressive regimes the population will continue to grow; rarely will deaths outstrip births. The terrain of a freehold could influence the rate of this growth, however. An unhealthy climate won't necessarily prevent population growth, but it could well impair it; a healthy climate will certainly promote the population growth.

Normal yearly population growth is 2-5% (1+d4) and represents the percentage of new births over and above the percentage of deaths. This growth is determined at the start of each year and is modified by the terrain type of the freehold. A mountain or maritime freehold adds +1% to growth; a desert or marsh subtracts 1% from growth, and all other types have no modification. Admittedly, these are very generalized. The DM should feel free to alter them to fit any specific situation. (Note that some races may have slow rates of reproduction, like elves and dwarves, while orcs could reproduce quickly.) This gives an annual growth rate from natural population increase of 1-6%, which (under the best circumstances) causes the population to double every 12 years or so. At the very worst, the population doubles every 72 years. On the average, a natural doubling occurs every 21 years or so, assuming nothing interferes with it.

Attracting new settlers is also very important. The number of new settlers coming to the freehold is determined at the start of each year. The base number of new settlers is 0-3% (d4−1) of the current population and is modified by terrain, the lord's domestic and foreign policies, and the tax rate of the freehold. The modifiers for new settlers are as follows:

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Freehold is desert or marsh = −1%
Domestic and foreign policy modifiers
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Inactive complacency = 0%
Active complacency = 0%
Progressive consolidation = +1%
Tax rate modifiers
Oppressive = −2%
Burdensome = −1%
Conservative = 0%
Liberal = +1%
Progressive = +2%

It is easy to see that certain combinations of terrain, policies, and taxes insure that no new settlers come to the freehold, while others guarantee a sizeable increase in the population due to new settlers. Any result of less than 0% is treated as 0%. A lord in a desert or marsh had best think his policies through very carefully if he desires any new settlers.

When all the modifiers are added or subtracted, we have a figure of 0-6% for new settlers. At the upper end of the scale, the lord has chosen the policies which will attract large numbers of new settlers. Few people want to live in a swamp and be ruled by a warmongering miser, but you can't keep them out of the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Add the final results for natural population growth and new settlers to arrive at a figure of 1-12% for the total annual population growth. Of the actual number of new inhabitants, 30% represents new male settlers of military age and boys of the freehold who have reached the military age that year. Once this figure is determined, a maximum of 25% may be added to the lord's men-at-arms. Any auxiliary forces may be increased proportionately.

Example 1: A freehold with a population of 2,200 is located in a large marsh. The lord has 95 men-at-arms and a fyrd of 704 men. Desperate for more arable land, the lord has decided upon a policy of belligerent aggressiveness and has opted for a burdensome tax rate to help finance his aggressions. At the start of the new year, he rolls a 4 on 1d4+1 for population growth, which is reduced to 3 because the freehold is in a marsh; this results in a 3% natural population growth. He gets lucky and rolls a 3 on 1d4−1 for new settlers, which is reduced to 2 for being in a marsh, then to 1 for his domestic and foreign policy, then to 0 because of his tax rate. There are no new settlers this year. The 3% natural growth results in a population increase of 66, of which 20 are men of military age. The lord could add 5 of these to his men-at-arms, increasing his fyrd to 724.

Example 2: A freehold with a population of 3,800 is located on a lush plain. The lord has 125 men-at-arms and a fair militia of 300 men. The lord is somewhat lazy and has no important plans for the future, so he selects a policy of inactive complacency and invokes a conservative tax rate. Rolling for population growth, he gets 2% as a final result. The roll for new settlers eventually comes out to 2%. This gives a total population increase of 152 people. Of these, 46 are of military age. A maximum of 12 could be added to the lord's men-at-arms, and the militia could be increased up to 350 or more.

Example 3: A freehold with a population of 5,400 is located in the mountains. The lord has 130 men-at-arms, special scouts, and 150 yeomen with 450 retainers. This generous and gifted lord has chosen a policy of progressive consolidation and has decided to lure new settlers by installing a liberal tax rate. Rolling for population growth, he ends up with 4% for being in the mountains. He eventually determines that the number of new settlers increases the population by another 4%. The total population increase is 8% (432 people). Of these, 130 are of military age. The lord could add 33 of them to his men-at-arms and increase his yeomanry by a similar amount.

A few guidelines must be followed in adding men-at-arms. First, they don't grow on trees. A lord can never replace more than 50% of any lost men-at-arms by drawing new ones from his population each year. Also, the number of men-at-arms may never be increased by more than 50% each year, no matter how high the population growth. Thus, a lord who recklessly loses the bulk of his tiny army must take several years to recover from the loss. Mercenaries could always be hired to make up the difference.

The last method of increasing population and forces is the hardest to explain. Whenever a lord takes over an area that is already populated, he must exert his authority over the inhabitants. Once this is done, the lord can increase his forces by drawing some portion of manpower from the conquered region. Details depend entirely on the situation, the DM, and the players. This method can be the quickest for army building, however.

Example: A mean and cruel lord attempts to overthrow his neighbor. In the process, his forces are decisively defeated and he himself is killed. The neighbor, a just and kind lord, quickly moves into the power vacuum takes over the dead lord's entire freehold, much to the rejoicing of its inhabitants. This sort of territorial aggrandizement could also occur by treaty, marriage, inheritance, etc.

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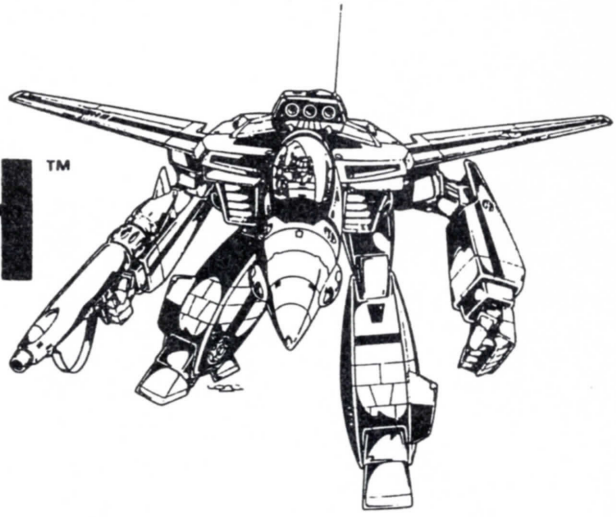

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By popular demand, we've added a new DRAGON® Magazine column for role-playing gamers: "Lords & Legends," a collection of heroes and heroines for use in TSR role-playing game campaigns as NPC adventure generators or as special PCs, at the DM's discretion. "Lords & Legends" is open to submissions from our readers, though these guidelines must be followed:

All submissions to this column should be printed on clean white paper, double-spaced, in clear type or word-processor print. If references were used to create the characters, the references must be included with the submission. We cannot use characters which are protected by copyright. Thus, we prefer original PCs and NPCs from role-playing campaigns, or historical or mythological figures. Characters may be tied to a specific game world — such as Oerth, Krynn, the Forgotten Realms, or Kara-Tur of the AD&D® game; the Known World and Blackmoor lands of the D&D® game; the Earth of the GAMMA WORLD® game; and, the Frontier of the STAR FRONTIERS® game.

Character descriptions should each be no more than five pages long, and the pages should be numbered and fixed together with a staple or paper clip. The author's address should appear on the first page of each submission. We may sort out characters and print them in various groups (all thieves, all halflings, all mutant squirrels, etc.), so don't count on seeing all of your submissions run together as their own group.

Descriptions should be complete and contain notes on personalities, special abilities, goals, and possible adventures relating to that character. Please send no more than six characters per submission. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you wish your characters to be returned; we cannot be responsible for submissions without SASEs.

POLYHEDRON™ Newszine has a feature similar to this one, called "The New Rogues Gallery" feature; if you wish your submissions to be considered for that periodical as well as for this one, please note this on your cover letter.

Lords & Legends

Three lords from the Age of Chivalry

by Katharine Kerr

The three men of chivalry who follow are all taken from the *chansons de geste*, a loosely related cycle of story-songs that form something of a sequel to the *Chanson de Roland* ("Song of Roland"). Their backgrounds and locations may be easily adapted into any medieval-style fantasy campaign, substituting any evil or hostile force for the Saracens and any lawful-good religion for the Christian faith under which these men served in mythology.

Count William of Orange

Male human
15th-level paladin

ARMOR CLASS: *1 (plate mail armor, shield, and dexterity bonus); see special abilities*
MOVE: *6″ in armor on foot; 20″ on heavy war horse (Baucent, as noted below, with cavalier ability)*
HIT POINTS: *127*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *5/2 with long sword or horseman's mace; 2 with any other melee weapon (including lance if dismounted and used as a pike); 1 with lance while mounted and charging*
ATTACK BONUSES: *+8 to hit with holy long sword (strength, cavalier, and magical bonuses); +4 to hit with a lance while mounted (cavalier and strength bonuses); +3 to hit with a long sword (cavalier and strength bonuses); +3 to hit with horseman's mace (cavalier and strength bonuses); +1 to hit with any other melee weapon (strength bonuses); see special abilities*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type (long sword, +8 for strength and magical bonuses (+13 vs. chaotic-evil opponents); heavy lance (mounted), +18 for cavalier and strength bonuses (see special abilities); heavy lance (dismounted), +4 for cavalier and strength bonuses; horseman's mace, +3 for strength bonus)*
SPECIAL ABILITIES: *Bonuses to weapons of choice (long sword, heavy lance, horseman's mace); ability to parry blows; makes attacks from horseback at +1 level; die-rolled damage from mounted lance used while charging is doubled before adding extra bonuses to it (with additional +2 bonus to hit and −1 to AC); cavalier horsemanship skills; immune to all* fear; *radiates* protection from fear and evil *within 10′ radius; 90% resistant to will-force magic and* psionic blast *attacks; +4 saving throw vs. will-force and illusion spells; +3 saving throw vs. "dodged" spells; +2 saving throw vs. all other magical spells; functions at −12 hp;* detect evil *at 60′ distance; immune to all disease; lay on hands to heal 30 hp damage once per day; use* cure disease *three times per week; turn undead as 13th-level good cleric; use clerical spells of up to fourth level; owns paladin's war horse and holy sword; numerous retainers and men-at-arms*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *50% in 5′ radius with holy sword;* dispel magic *at 15th level in 5′ radius with holy sword; see special abilities for more*
SIZE: *M (6′5″ tall)*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful good*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil (see special abilities)*
SPELLS: *As per a 15th-level paladin (see text)*

S: 18(34)	I: 13	W: 16	
D: 15	C: 18	CH: 17	CO: 18

William's father, Aimeri, a loyal vassal of Charlemagne, raised his seven sons to serve God above all, and the king second only to God. When he was only a boy, William, the third son, so impressed Charlemagne that the king asked him to swear an oath to protect the young Prince Louis, because Charlemagne feared Louis

was better suited to be a cloistered monk than a king. Charlemagne's fears turned out to be well-founded. On his ascension to the throne, Louis fell prey to scheming clerics and flattering courtiers, who indulged the king's weaknesses and drove, through intrigue, all the good men from court. Only William stayed loyal, intervening several times to save Louis from dishonor and even death. The court clique resented this so much that when Louis was handing out fiefs, they persuaded him to pass William over. Though he was forced to leave court, William remained loyal to his liege. He promised to come whenever the king should recall him, then rode off to win his fief by force of arms. He took Orange, a small city with a splendid castle, from the Saracens and converted all the inhabitants to his faith. He now rules there as count.

William is well over 6′ tall, towering over most men, with broad shoulders and a booming, boisterous laugh. The end of his nose was nicked off in battle by a pagan, who then mocked him for the disfigurement. Before he cut the pagan into little pieces, William returned the jest, saying that by shortening his nose, the pagan had lengthened his name. To this day, he is usually called Count William Short-nose (Court-nez, if the DM prefers the original tongue). In spite of the nose, he is still so handsome that some women fall in love with him at first sight. If he is encountered in his palace, William will be dressed so simply, in jerkin and hose, that he may be mistaken for a man of much lower rank. In battle, he wears plate armor, carries a massive shield, and is as adept with the lance as with the long sword.

William is very courteous to strangers, offering them hospitality and listening to any tale or request for aid. He likes a good joke with a guest, as long as no one's honor is insulted, and receives any teasing about his nose with a good-humored smile. If, however, anyone is cruel or discourteous to others in his presence or insults his honor, William flies into one of his famous rages. He shouts the most cutting insults and grabs any available weapon for revenge, though when he calms down, he apologizes for any injustice. Once he called Louis's queen a harlot (and worse) before the entire court when she was acting dishonorably. Another time, he grabbed a silver serving tray and slew three pagans with it for insulting his honor. If he has inadvertently insulted someone else's honor, he most humbly begs their pardon and offers to make amends.

Since William's real love in life is battle, he grows depressed and moody in peacetime. Given a chance at a worthy fight, he recovers his good spirits, laughing and singing as he prepares for battle. His favorite targets are the Saracens, whom he will attack at any time simply because they're unbelievers. In the context of an AD&D game, however, the DM should avoid sensitive religious issues by making these enemies not Moslems, as in the original tales, but beings of evil alignment. Doing so hardly violates the spirit of the stories, in which Saracens are portrayed as huge fiends with bright red eyes, long claws, and bloody fangs as often as they are real men and women. These Saracens also swear by the god Tergavant, who has nothing to do with the religious philosophy of Mohammed. Since nothing whatever is known about Tergavant outside of these references in the *chanson de geste* cycle, the DM can invent whatever evil deity will fit into his campaign. An appropriate detail might be that Tergavant requires children to be sacrificed to him, since that was a common medieval rumor about any people who weren't much liked.

If a party of characters comes to William with tales of the evil worshipers of Tergavant or stories of oppression of the poor, it is 95% likely that William offers his assistance. If the DM rolls 96 or higher on the percentile dice, William would like to aid the party but is under a prior obligation to King Louis. If the party tries to enlist William's aid for selfish ends, especially if some party members are evil, it is only 5% likely he will aid them.

Besides being a skilled fighter, William is adept at disguises. He knows various herbs that will dye the skin and hair to change one's appearance, as well as the various languages of the pagans in his neighborhood. He loves to go in disguise and will often volunteer to spy out a town or enemy fortification, either alone or with a few companions. His fame is so great, however, that there is a 10% cumulative chance per day that someone will recognize his clipped nose. If discovered, William begins fighting his way out rather than trying another ruse. He never lies, even if his life depends on it, if an enemy asks him an outright question.

When William won his fief, he also won his wife, Guiborc. At that time, her name was Orable, the beautiful daughter of a great infidel lord, Desrame. She was married off against her will to the aged king Tiebault of Orange, who didn't much care for her. When William appeared to spy out the city, Orable instantly fell in love with him, rescued him from prison, and showed him a secret tunnel under the city so that his men could come in and take over. On William's victory, she converted to his faith, married him, and took her new name. She is a devoted wife and is the only one who can cheer him up in times of peace. While William is away at war, Guiborc capably rules the fief. Once, with only women and children to help her, she captained Orange through a long, terrible siege until William could return to the rescue. If such a situation arises again, she dons plate mail armor and fights as a 2nd-level fighter (her statistics are left to the DM's discretion).

If any man attempts to besmirch Guiborc's honor, William kills him on the spot. One wrong word brings a challenge to a duel. William is a devoted husband who has nothing to do with other women. William has also sworn a vow that if his wife should die before him, he will retire to a monastery and devote himself to God.

On his deathbed, Charlemagne gave William his own sword, Joyeuse, a +5 *Holy Avenger* long sword. William's war horse, Baucent, is a true and faithful paladin's destrier. Baucent has AC 5 without armor, HD 5+5, hp 40, MV 18″, attacks as a heavy war horse, and has an intelligence of 6. William won Baucent from the same infidel giant, Corsolt, who nicked his nose. This mighty horse wears plate barding in combat, giving it AC 1.

In the old tales, William has a large body of armed retainers (though this is not the normal rule for paladins in the game system; William is an exception). If the DM wishes to bring him in line with the AD&D rules for paladins, he may put this body of men under the command of Bertrand, as described below. Otherwise, though Orange is a splendid palace, William himself lives simply in humble apartments. His only real adornment is a small silver crucifix worn under his tunic.

As a paladin, William has clerical spells at his disposal. If the DM wishes, he may use the following spells, but in any case, William should always have the *prayer* spell: *protection from evil, remove fear, resist cold, know alignment, resist fire, prayer, detect lie.*

Bertrand

Male human
10th-level fighter

ARMOR CLASS: *2 (plate mail armor and shield); see special abilities*
MOVE: *6″ in armor on foot; 15″ on heavy war horse*
HIT POINTS: *94*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *3/2 with melee weapons; 1 with lance while mounted and charging*
ATTACK BONUSES: *+1 to hit with melee weapons; see special abilities*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type (long sword or heavy lance, +2 for strength); see special abilities*
SPECIAL ABILITIES: *Die-rolled damage*

from mounted lance used while charging is doubled before adding extra bonuses to it (with additional +2 bonus to hit and −1 to AC)
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
SIZE: *M (5'11" tall)*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful good*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

S: 17 I: 15 W: 14
D: 14 C: 17 CH: 16 CO: 16

Bertrand is the son of William's brother, Bernard de Brubant, but he prefers to live with his famous uncle, who loves him like a son. Bertrand is the perfect follower, utterly devoted and true but never slavish and sycophantic. When William is in one of his fits, either of rage or enthusiasm, Bertrand acts as the voice of reason, pointing out flaws in his uncle's thinking, tempering his anger, or even arguing outright if a plan seems unworkable. Bertrand does not share William's loyalty to King Louis. Though he'll fight for the king at William's command, Bertrand is utterly disgusted with Louis's shabby treatment of William. He often advises William: "Forget a man who's too weak to hold a foot of his own land." This is the one piece of his advice which William refuses to follow.

Though a young man, Bertrand is a hardened warrior who's been fighting the pagans since the age of 13. Slender and tall, he is courteous to guests, though he isn't given to excess words. He dresses a bit more elegantly than William in embroidered tunics and has luxurious apartments in the castle.

Bertrand leads a band of mounted fighters at his uncle's service. The troop consists of 100 men, 50 of them 4th-level fighters and 50 of them 3rd, all of whom wear plate mail armor and use shields, lances, and long swords. They are fanatically devoted to both William and Bertrand. The DM should allow this troop a +25% modifier in any situation where a loyalty or morale check is required, so long as they are under the direct command of those two or fighting to rescue them. If both Bertrand and William are killed, the troop fights to the death to avenge them.

Count Rainouart of Tortelose

Male human
8th-level fighter

ARMOR CLASS: *2 (plate mail armor and shield)*
MOVE: *6" in armor on foot; 15" on heavy war horse*
HIT POINTS: *83*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *2 with giant club; 3/2 with other melee weapons (long sword)*
ATTACK BONUSES: *+4 with giant club (strength and weapon-specialization bonus); +3 with any other melee weapon (long sword or heavy lance)*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type (giant club, 2d4+8 for strength and weapon-specialization bonuses; other weapons, +6 for strength bonus)*
SPECIAL ABILITIES: *Die-rolled damage from mounted lance used while charging is doubled before adding extra bonuses to it (with additional +2 bonus to hit and −1 to AC); weapon specialization with giant club*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
SIZE: *M (7' tall)*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful good*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

S: 18(00) I: 13 W: 12
D: 13 C: 18 CH: 12 CO: 14

Rainouart, whose name is pronounced Rahn-wahr, is William's brother-in-law and his most devoted friend. Rainouart rules the county next to Orange. If William asks him for aid, Rainouart is certain to respond, since he owes his position and his fief to William's generosity.

Rainouart is the son of Desrame the infidel and is thus Guiborc's brother. When Rainouart was a child of seven, he ran away from his father's court after a quarrel with his tutor. Slavers kidnapped the boy and sold him to King Louis's seneschal. The miserable Louis recognized the boy's regal bearing and refused to let him go free, hoping to sell him back to his family for a high price. When Rainouart refused to tell his father's name, he was banished to work in the kitchens, where, years later, William found him.

Since the lad was already showing signs of becoming a true warrior, William rescued him from the kitchen and took him along to his current war. Since Rainouart had never been in a proper battle before, he fought with a wooden club so heavy that it took two ordinary men to lift it. Whenever he got a strike on an infidel, Rainouart unfortunately bashed the horse along with the rider. Since horses were at a premium in a long war, he was persuaded to try proper arms and armor. He went on using the club until it finally shattered against a particularly tough pagan. In desperation, he drew his sword and found, much to his surprise, that it worked even better.

From that day on, Rainouart worked at becoming a proper knight. In moments of great stress, however, he is still 40% likely to throw down his sword, tear an enormous branch from a convenient tree, and start bashing the enemy with this improvised club. If he loses or drops his sword, he always procures a club rather than retrieve his weapon. Because of his unusual strength and years of practice, the DM should treat these tree branches as morning stars, not cudgels. If he is fighting inside a room, Rainouart grabs a massive log from the fire, a wooden bench, or an iron sconce from the wall; these weapons should be treated as normal clubs.

At 7' tall, Rainouart is the only man who can tower over William the way William towers over others. For all his height, Rainouart is a good-looking, soft-spoken young man, devoted to his wife, Aelis, one of William's nieces. He is hospitable to strangers and tries very hard to be courtly, but his huge hands often get in his way. If he tries to pour wine, for example, it is 80% likely he spills it. In many ways he is more religious than most knights born to the faith. He is exceptionally generous to the poor and turns no beggar at his gates away hungry. In times of war, he protects the common people and makes sure that their fields aren't stripped to feed the armies.

His one real fault, however, is his temper. Those long years of serving in the kitchen made him extremely touchy over matters of honor. As an example, when he was being baptized, Rainouart insisted on sticking his head in the font himself rather than letting a priest throw water at him. If anyone insults William and his family, Rainouart responds as to an insult to his own honor. There is a 25% chance that he can control himself long enough to make a formal challenge to a duel, but otherwise he grabs the nearest clublike object and starts swinging. Only his wife and his sister can talk him out of a real rage.

Rainouart has a troop of 25 2nd-level fighters which he willingly leads to William's aid. He shares Bertrand's opinion of King Louis and does not fight for him unless William gives him a direct order to do so.

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Glory, Danger, and Wounds

Cavaliers and their pursuit of honor

Illustration by Gustave Doré
courtesy of Dover Publications, Inc.

by Garry Hamlin

Both knights were standing in water up to their chests, while arrows, lances, and stones rained down all around them. Before them, the enemy army lay massed on the shore in enormous numbers. Behind them, their exasperated friends called from retreating ships, urging them to hurry and come aboard so the ships could be off.

But the two knights had a problem. Each had sworn before the battle to be the last man to retreat, and each had refused to let the other have all the glory. Since neither was willing to yield on this point of honor, they were unable to find a solution to their predicament. Instead of retreating, they shrugged and began wading back toward shore, where the enemy now stood in anxious bewilderment. Escape had been only a few feet away, but rather than risk the least suggestion of dishonor the two knights had quietly chosen to face the opposing army together — and fight to the death!

A preposterous conclusion? No doubt. But this is roughly the situation described in *Tirant the White*, a 15th-century manuscript intended to portray the epitome of chivalry.[1] The story of the legendary Tirant and his comrade Richard the Venturesome would have been considerably shorter if the knights hadn't found a way out of their impasse. As it turned out, Richard eventually agreed to retreat up the ladder into the awaiting galley if Tirant would only put his foot on the ladder first. Even this didn't totally resolve the problem, since once aboard the ship the pair got into an angry brawl over which of them was the more worthy knight. When Tirant refused to fight a duel to the death over the matter, Richard became a fierce enemy and refused to be reconciled until Tirant saved his life in battle.

Characters with extreme views or personalities can represent a gold mine for role-playing, and Tirant and Richard certainly represent an idealized chivalric extreme. Would the average historical knight have acted this way? Probably not. But Tirant and Richard certainly embodied how these knights felt they *ought* to behave.

Heroic legends are the stuff from which fantasy role-playing is fashioned. Yet a player running a cavalier or paladin character in an AD&D® game may have difficulty understanding the heavy emphasis these classes place on adherence to a chivalric code. Our society's way of thinking is very different from theirs. While no one would deny that a modern soldier who behaved like Tirant and Richard was

very brave, many of us would also consider him very stupid. But chivalry was not a code of self-preservation or common sense. It was a code of honor — and honor, to its adherents, was more important than life itself.

Honor in battle

Consider, for instance, *The Song of Roland,* in which the chivalric ideal becomes almost self-destructive. The rearguard of Charlemagne's forces, led by Count Roland, was attacked by a force of Saracens many times its size. Despite the urgings of his friends, Roland refused to use his horn to sound an alarm that would have summoned the main force of Charlemagne's army to his force's aid.

To Roland's way of thinking, calling for help would have been dishonorable — after all, their enemies were only Saracens! Not until his forces were clearly about to be massacred did Roland consider sounding the alarm. By this time, there was no hope that Charlemagne's forces would arrive in time for a rescue. Rather, Roland sounded the horn in hope that the returning troops would avenge their deaths.

What follows is the kind of epic battle that modern-day readers are familiar with primarily through parodies by Monty Python and others. With one heave of his great sword Durendal, Roland downed a mounted, armored opponent — the force of the blow being so great that it chopped through the rider's saddle and killed his horse as well. Others of Roland's company struck similarly mighty blows.

Even at the battle's bleakest, Roland's forces fought on. The Archbishop Turpin of Rheims — a fighting man of God if ever there was one, and one of Roland's primary counselors — found himself unhorsed and with four lance heads embedded in his breast. Still, he rose from the battlefield, drew his sword Almace, and downed 400 of the enemy before his heart stopped beating from exhaustion. When Roland found Turpin's body, the brain and bowels were clearly exposed to view. Considering the kind of damage these legendary figures absorbed while still managing to continue in the fray, it's no wonder that members of the cavalier class are allowed to operate in the negative hit point range.

Of course, the kind of strokes described in Roland's battle are all but impossible. Modern day writer Poul Anderson, considering this sort of thing, notes that primary sources aren't always to be trusted. Every now and then, he notes, you find references to "somebody cutting a head or limb off somebody else with a single stroke. Try this yourself on a pork roast, suspended without a chopping block, and see how far you get." This could be done, Anderson notes, "with the best of the classic Japanese swords, which are marvels of metallurgy."[2] However, these are unlikely to have been available to Roland and his company.

Today, a soldier failing to sound an alarm in battle would most likely get a court-martial for insubordination. To the mind of the medieval warrior, however, Roland's being too proud to call for help represented a "tragic flaw" in an essentially noble character. But even in the Middle Ages, is seems safe to assume that Roland's example was more admired by the medieval warrior than followed in practice.

Knights with more savvy — even legendary ones like Tirant — did not hesitate to use delaying tactics in battle when faced with overwhelming odds. In one campaign, Tirant found his army faced with a force of Saracens many times its size, both armies being camped along a river near separate bridges. When the enemy would mass its forces on one bank of the river, Tirant would send his forces to the opposite bank to avoid combat with the superior force.

Both armies spent several days forming and reforming until the frustrated Saracens decided to force a battle by dividing their forces, leaving some on each bank of the river. Tirant then had the bridge connecting the two Saracen armies burned and finished each force off at his leisure. When the Saracen King of Egypt sent Tirant a letter rebuking him for winning by treachery rather than valor, Tirant responded simply that he had won by skill, not treachery, and that no one would blame him for his actions.

Unfortunately, real-life knights did not always see things so clearly, and they tended at times to confuse valor in battle with competence. French tactics at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415 provide a good illustration of this. The French, facing a smaller force of exhausted and ill English invaders, launched a courageous charge through a narrow neck of muddy land, straight into the line of English long-bow fire. The French were apparently expecting their heavier armor, a recent innovation, to protect them from English arrows. Instead, French horses and men slipped in the mud under missile fire, and their heavier armor, perhaps intended as a "secret weapon," made the knights so clumsy they were unable to get back up. The bulk of the English troops, being largely unarmored and therefore fully mobile, swarmed over the fallen knights like a tribe of ants on a host of fallen beetles. Although French forces had outmatched the English by three to one, the French suffered ten times the losses of their English opponents and were left with a devastating defeat.[3]

Perhaps we can only begin to understand how protective legendary knights were of their honor when we realize what happened to "dishonored" knights. In a legendary English tournament, Thomas of Muntalba fought on fiercely although wounded in the groin and almost managed to defeat Tirant until he collapsed of blood loss. Accepting dishonor rather than death, Thomas surrendered to Tirant — and was expelled from his knightly order for this craven act.

In Tirant's world, the ceremony for expulsion was mercilessly explicit. First, the dishonored knight was placed on a scaffold as a public spectacle. There, his armor was stripped from him piece by piece, the dishonored steel being hurled in the dust. Finally, a bowl of hot water was thrown in his face, and he was given a new name and denied the right ever to use his old one again. The ceremony being completed, the knight was summarily hurled from the scaffold.

And you think you've had humiliating experiences! Tirant's legend records that one dishonored knight suffered such outrage over the infamy being heaped on him that his gall bladder burst and he choked to death on his own bile. As for poor Thomas of Muntalba, he quietly entered a monastery upon his recovery and disappeared from history.

Honor in private duels

Nor was the battlefield or tournament the only arena in which a knight's honor must be strictly defended. Although sometimes illegal, private duels were apparently all too common, some of them being fought under horrifying conditions and for reasons we would probably regard today as trivial. One episode from Tirant's legend illustrates this perfectly.

In this instance, Tirant asked for and was given a brooch from a beautiful maiden's bodice to wear in a tournament as a sign of his service to her. This raised the ire of the girl's long-time suitor, Sir Barrentowns, who promptly challenged Tirant to surrender the token or fight him to the death.

Tirant was not in love with the girl, nor was he competing with Sir Barrentowns for her hand. Yet rather than surrender the honor the girl had done him in giving him the brooch, Tirant submitted to a ghastly duel. The opponents faced each other wielding 1½'-long, double-edged Genoese knives "with well-sharpened points." The two knights were "armored" only in French linen shirts and garlands of flowers. For added protection, a shield made out of a single sheet of paper was divided between them!

With so little protection, it's needless to

say that the melee between Tirant and Sir Barrentowns was rapidly resolved. The close of combat found both knights unconscious and bleeding on the ground. Tirant had suffered eleven wounds, any four of which could have been mortal, and Sir Barrentowns suffered as many as five mortal wounds. Tirant "won" this battle simply by virtue of having survived. But, more important to him than victory, his "honor" survived intact. As for Sir Barrentowns, he was buried with considerable ceremony as a knight who never betrayed his calling. No one seemed to think it scandalous that he wasted seven years of his life courting the maiden, who admired his courage but refused to marry him because he wasn't as rich as her parents.

Reverence for one's lord

For a profession so notoriously touchy about its honor, it's amazing how much abuse a knight was expected to take from his rightful lord without even token defense. In *The Song of The Cid*, Ruy Diaz, the Cid, is unrighteously exiled from his homeland by King Alfonso of Leon and Castile. To add insult to injury, the king gives Diaz only nine days to leave the country. Worse still, he orders his subjects on pain of death not to sell or supply Diaz with anything on his way into exile.

Yet Diaz leaves his family in the hands of strangers without a single reproach against his liege. Wandering homeless in Spain with only those willing to follow him into misfortune, Diaz achieves a number of stunning military victories against the Saracens and carves out a nation for himself within that hostile culture. Despite King Alfonso's despicable treatment of him, Diaz sends gifts to the king out of the spoils of each major battle. Even though the king has stripped him of his lands without so much as a hearing, Diaz continues to honor Alfonso as his rightful lord. Seeing the Cid's service in the face of such abuse, Alfonso's subjects can't help but murmur, "Were his lord but worthy — God, how fine a vassal!" But the Cid himself utters no complaint against his king.

The chivalric code of obedience to one's liege is explained early on in Tirant's legend by William of Warwick, Tirant's tutor in the knightly virtues. Says William, "No matter how much evil he may do to you, always obey your natural lord. Though he may seize your lands, never oppose His Majesty. . . . Even if he strikes you with his hand, staff, or sword, your natural lord can never shame you, though he may harm your person." William explains further to Tirant that once he saw a duke wrongfully struck by the Emperor himself. The duke submitted to this treatment patiently, though he warned the spectators that any of *them* who tried to take similar liberties with him would sorely regret it.

Honor before gold

The item that probably runs most against the grain for today's role-playing gamer is the chivalric code's supposed disdain for (gasp!) treasure itself. We are all familiar with the incredible intellectual gyrations of players who argue that they really *can* carry the 3,000-lb. platinum statue of the mud goddess Boopde'ella up 12 flights of orc-infested, slimy stairs while wearing full plate armor and carrying an unconscious maiden under one arm. ("Of course," they'll argue, when brought face to face with facts, "I can always come *back* for the maiden if it's really too much.")

What gain could Roland have hoped for in his celebrated battle? And what did the Cid gain from consistently yielding his fantastic spoils to the needs of his followers? In Tirant's legend, William of Warwick epitomizes this attitude when he refuses "30 wagons of jewels" as a reward for repelling an invasion of England. William accepts nothing for his efforts but "glory, danger and wounds." Similarly, when Tirant foils a Saracen invasion of Rhodes, its overjoyed citizens pile their treasure in the city square and beg Tirant to take "all your hands can hold." Tirant responds simply that the honor of the occasion is sufficient for him.

Role-playing implications

The gaming implications of all this become apparent with only a little bit of thought. Certainly, many players will be reluctant to have their characters follow a code of honor that makes their lives more difficult. But an adept game master can insure that the NPCs expect the PCs to practice what their professions preach.

Imagine the frustration of a band of players over an NPC cavalier whom their characters have managed to persuade to "help" their party. Let's say this NPC, Sir Roderic the Bold, is standing watch for the party, which is camped by night in a pine forest. Sir Roderic suddenly hears the sounds of an approaching band of orcs. Sleeping around the campfire are the party's PCs: Sir Galen, a cavalier; Plahg, a barbarian; Pinky Four Fingers, a thief; and, Elissa Meadowflower, a druidess. Will Sir Roderic wake them up to join in the fight, or will he nobly decide that he can handle the situation by himself ("They're only orcs!"), leaving the PCs to be surprised by the ensuing melee?

If the melee turns against the party, will Sir Roderic be willing to retreat, or will he propose that the party make a valiant last stand? If Sir Roderic chooses "tactical withdrawal," he will certainly want to be the last member of the party to do so — and he will probably jab Sir Galen about this later if Sir Galen doesn't challenge him for the honor. Finally, having withdrawn, Sir Roderic will want to insure that his honor hasn't been tarnished, and he will probably argue with other party members, and certainly with Sir Galen, over who performed the most valiant deeds in the battle.

Additionally, imagine poor Sir Roderic's confusion if a low-life like Pinkie or Plahg turns out to be the party's real leader instead of Sir Galen. From Sir Roderic's perspective, commoners like thieves and barbarians could only be Sir Galen's servants, never his peers (let alone his superiors). Through long experience together, the players will doubtless have allowed their characters to slip into a certain amount of familiarity with each other. And Sir Roderic, viewing Sir Galen's egalitarian treatment of his social inferiors, might well conclude that Sir Galen has been "bewitched" by Plahg or Pinkie, or is unworthy of his status as a knight.

Suppose Sir Roderic concludes that Sir Galen, by his unchivalrous conduct, has forfeited his right to lead the party. Doubtless, Sir Roderic would challenge Sir Galen to yield this honor or face him in personal combat. If the party submits to Sir Roderic's leadership, the players will certainly be aghast when he waives away treasure offered to the party by grateful townsmen in reward for their valiant exploits. Just as Pinkie and Plahg advance, hands itching to seize their well-earned spoils, Sir Roderic — chest swelling with knightly pride — steps forward to announce to the gathered citizenry that the glory of their exploits is reward enough. Before Plahg and Pinkie can take another step, the crowd cheers Sir Roderic's generous offer and removes the treasure. Plahg's and Pinkie's faces are a study of anguished bewilderment as the hoard of glittering jewels that almost was theirs retreats out of reach into the safety of a nearby vault. Sir Roderic's reputation has been enhanced by turning down a king's ransom as a reward. But Plahg and Pinkie are merely older and wiser — and arguably poorer for missing a load of treasure that might have been theirs.

Even if Sir Roderic is not allowed to assume leadership, the party is certain to be annoyed by his behavior toward the druidess. If Elissa Meadowflower has above average charisma and comeliness, Sir Roderic may assume she is secretly of noble birth and ask her for a scarf, brooch, or even an intimate article of clothing for him to wear in battle as an emblem of his devotion. Sir Roderic's advances will be all the more inconvenient if Elissa has taken vows of chastity that forbid her from responding positively to

such requests. If Sir Galen attempts to intervene, naturally Sir Roderic will consider him a rival and challenge him to personal combat "to prove which of us is more worthy to serve this lady!" A female cavalier in an AD&D game could turn the tables and make equally outrageous demands upon handsome male characters she sees, seeking to serve one as a champion at arms.

If the party is lucky, Sir Roderic will already be committed to another lady, precluding his advances toward Elissa. But even then, Sir Roderic is certain to be wearing some article of woman's clothing on his person — Tirant wore the equivalent of his lady's slip into battle, in plain view, over his armor — and woe to any poor soul who dared to smile at the sight!

Even if the party manages to divest itself of Sir Roderic, doubtless there will be plenty of NPCs who are sick and tired of snooty cavaliers looking down their noses at them. These folk might well include powerful figures such as a town mayor or a rich businessman. From long experience, they might reasonably consider knights to be nothing more than a bunch of arrogant hypocrites. Influential persons like these might take malicious delight in pointing out to Sir Galen, as he passes through their town, every point at which his behavior falls short of the chivalric ideal. They might even go so far as to have mocking lyrics about him composed, causing other knights to try to hunt him down and eliminate this disgrace to their profession. How Sir Galen responds to these pressures will define him as a knight.

Some bad examples

Rest assured that whatever response the PCs make to all this, there's bound to be a historical precedent. History and literature abound with knights who make very poor examples but also very interesting reading. In the 1300s, for instance, Sir Eustache d'Aubrecicourt of the Netherlands was having problems sustaining himself because of peace treaties between nations that interfered with his ability to take plunder and spoil in France. Sir Eustache's solution was to organize a band of "free companions" who plundered and despoiled France anyway. At one point, Eustache apparently had a thriving industry going on selling castles back to their rightful lords at phenomenal costs.[4]

Similarly, the English knight and brigand Sir Robert Knollys, probably the most dangerous man in Europe in his time, made such a mess of France that his company left a trail of ravaged towns whose charred gables were referred to as "Knollys' miters." Legend has it that at one place French villagers threw themselves into the river at the mere mention of his approach. Whether Knollys was legally a criminal or a privateer at any given point was mostly a matter of whether France and England happened to be at war at the time, or otherwise whether the king of England found it politically expedient to pardon Sir Robert's latest exploits.[5]

If some knights were neither good nor lawful, neither were all of them brave. William Shakespeare's play *King Henry IV* gives us a beautiful example of the cowardly knight in his portrayal of Sir John Falstaff, based on a historical raffish knight who was ultimately burned at the stake for heresy. Apparently knighted at a point of greater youth and valor, Sir John has degenerated by the time we meet him into an enormously fat, drunken old sensualist who can scarcely waddle 20 paces in highway robbery, let alone conduct himself suitably in battle. Assigned by the king to draft villagers to put down a rebellion, Falstaff takes bribes from men trying to evade military service, spends the money on his own vices, then fills the ranks of his company with outcasts and criminals he manages to spring from prison.

When forced to enter battle, Falstaff keels over and plays dead at the first opportunity, even though he hasn't been so much as wounded. Yet in order to appear to have fought valiantly, he rises during a lull in battle and stabs the dead body of a fallen enemy leader, then carries the body to the king to "prove" he has slain a great rebel knight. If Tirant represents the chivalric ideal, Falstaff certainly represents the opposite.

Finally, no summary would be complete without at least a nod to Miguel de Cervantes' famous creation, Don Quixote, the mad knight of LaMancha. Actually an aging Spanish petty noble living on a tight income, Cervantes' mock hero has simply read so much about knights and their exploits that his brains dry up and he falls into the delusion that he has become a knight himself. In this wide-eyed, addled state, Don Quixote roams the countryside on a rickety horse looking for wrongs to right. He jousts with windmills he takes to be giants magically disguised by sorcerers. He recovers a barber's basin which he believes is secretly a great enchanted artifact, the helmet of Mambrino. His other ridiculous exploits cannot be briefly summarized here.

All of these character types would make interesting NPC encounters, especially for a PC cavalier who is trying to come to grips with his own response to the ideals of chivalry. A particular cavalier may or may not choose to adhere strictly to a code of honor — but the character should not be permitted to be simply a 20th-century man or woman in plate mail. The character class can't possibly be portrayed well if the player and the Dungeon Master don't understand the social context in which the character operates and how important the concept of honor is going to be to other cavaliers that are encountered.

Gaming sessions never grow stale when players face new challenges for role-playing. Emphasis on "honor" presents the players with a whole new set of problems to be solved — and is likely to liven up any single evening's adventure or flagging campaign.

End notes

[1] Joanot Martorell and Marti Joan de Galba, *Tirant Lo Blanc*, translated by David H. Rosenthal (New York: Warner Books, 1985). All further references to Tirant are from the pages of this work.

[2] Poul Anderson, "On Thud and Blunder," in *Fantasy*, edited by Jim Baen (New York: Pinnacle Books, 1981), page 174.

[3] Barbara W. Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), pages 584-5.

[4] *Ibid.*, page 166.

[5] *Ibid.*, page 165. Ω

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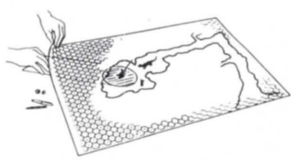

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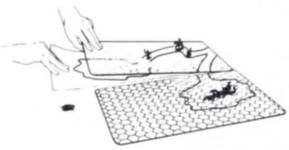

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The Best for the Best

Elite espionage agencies for TOP SECRET® games

by William Van Horn

The new TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game incorporates many of the concepts about elite espionage agencies discussed in this article. The Orion Foundation, the espionage group presented for use by player characters in that game, is itself an elite group much like the ones presented here. The TOP SECRET/S.I. game allows agents to gain Fame and Fortune points instead of experience points, and no agent level-advancement system exists. However, the advice here is perfectly sound and, with minor adjustment, applies to any espionage role-playing game.

Spy games need elite agencies! This is more or less what a group of disgruntled TOP SECRET® game players told me one year ago, and they were right. At the time, I was acting as Administrator in a rather large TOP SECRET game campaign with both novice and experienced players taking part. After four disappointing sessions, three of my most experienced players came to me and said that they were, of all things, bored. They wanted more challenging missions that would allow them to work in small teams or alone, with a minimum of agency support. Instead of telling these players to put up or shut up, I sat down and explained what I had in mind to help them. Thus, the elite agency concept came into being.

Before we leap into the game mechanics of elite agencies, a brief look at the basic elite philosophy is in order. Most of my inspiration came from the military elite concept. Most readers are familiar with the military elite groups: the U.S. Army's Special Forces (Green Berets) and Ranger units, the U.S. Navy's SEALs, the British Special Air Service (SAS), Soviet Spetsnaz units (actually part of Soviet military intelligence, the GRU), and many others. In spite of the different national origins of these units, they have many things in common. Each of these units is composed of the best men a country's military has to offer. These units are usually small and highly trained. In wartime, these units are given the toughest missions. Unlike the strict discipline found in regular units, elite units encourage self-reliance and confidence. Leadership is by example. Since their operations often don't go "by the book," members of elite units have to be ready to handle the unexpected and still complete their assigned missions.

Of course, not everything about elite units is good. The very selective nature of their training tends to breed enemies, since not everyone who tries out for these units is selected. It also costs a great deal of money to train and equip an elite force. Both these factors work against elite military groups, but they have proven their worth many times over in combat. Throughout history, from the Turkish Janissaries to the British SAS, elite forces have shown that they are worth the effort it takes to maintain them. Since the elite idea works in the military, it should work in TOP SECRET game campaigns.

Elements of elite agencies

This article considers the existing intelligence agencies, such as the CIA, KGB, etc., to be the "regulars." Their broad goals and sheer size keep them out of the elite category. They also fail to meet the main requirement of an elite agency: total secrecy. In order to be really effective, an elite agency should be as low-key as possible. This means that the regular agencies won't have the faintest idea who's operating against them. This breeds confusion that your elite agents can and should use to help them pull off a difficult mission.

This brings us to the first steps in the creation of an elite agency: security and a special chain of command. Since security is greater when only a few people know the secret, I would suggest that all Administrators who want to design an elite agency set a size limit for their group. After a year of playtesting, I have found that 10 agents is a good maximum number. Remember, that is 10 active agents in the whole *agency*, not in one team! No more than four agents should be used as a team. Any more than that and your team or agency becomes too noticeable.

A special chain of command, unlike security, is an option for an elite agency but is highly recommended. It gives your campaign a distinct flavor and style if the agents get their briefings from, say, a four-star general instead of an old man in a navy blue suit. Since your elite agency is secret, the only government officials who know about it should be very highly placed, like the President or Prime Minister. As suggested above, high-ranking military officers can take the place of civilians. Using this system also gives you, the Admin, a chance to have some fun while giving out mission briefings. Would your agents be disrespectful to the Secretary of Defense?

Once you have taken care of the above steps, it's time to come to grips with another major facet of the elite system: setting an entry level for your agency. Since most, if not all, elite agencies don't have the manpower to train rookies, all agents wishing to enter an elite agency must gain some experience in another agency first. This gives the Admin a chance to see how a particular player performs, and it lets a player learn how to play TOP SECRET games. Once a player's agent reaches third level, he should know how to play the game and how to carry out a mission specific to his agent's bureau. Then, if you wish, you can extend the invitation to join your elite agency in the form of a mysterious phone call, a meeting with a strange man in a black

trench coat, or some other dramatic stunt. Should the character accept, you should then fake the death of that character (car accidents are a good way to do this) and change his name (security, you understand).

Before going on, it might be helpful to explain the reasoning behind having an entry level and faking the death of a character. Since the missions given to elite agents are often more difficult than usual, these agents should have some experience first. Think of it as on the job training. Faking a character's death gives him a definite edge in the field. After all, dead agents are dead agents. The bad guys wouldn't expect a dead agent to return to haunt them, so to speak. Staging the death of an agent is, of course, optional, though it adds an element of drama and sacrifice to an otherwise routine event.

On the other hand, having an entry level is absolutely essential. Remember, just because an agent wants to join your elite agency doesn't mean you have to let him! By requiring agents to achieve a certain level, you have ample opportunity to see how they perform in the field. If this trial period shows that an agent is, for example, too prone to use violent solutions when other, less obvious methods are available, you will be able to exclude him from your elite agency if you wish. I feel that third level is the best entry level available, but don't feel limited to it by any means. You could modify the entry level up or (in very rare cases) down depending on the experience and temperament of your players. For example, if your particular group tends to be very violent, you could raise the entry level to weed out the more violent agents. On the other hand, if your group is composed mainly of quiet, sneaky agents, you could lower the entry level. In no instance should agents be accepted into an elite agency at first level. They need to prove themselves first.

Once you have decided on an entry level, you need to decide what benefits an agent gets when he joins your elite agency. Since these agents will soon be going on very difficult missions with little or no field support, they need all the material help they can get. I have experimented with various types of benefits and have found that the following are the most useful.

When an agent joins an elite agency, he should automatically become eligible for special equipment. This benefit gives your agents a boost from the start. One way of doing this is to give each agent a piece of special equipment that is unique to his bureau as soon as the agent joins your agency. A special gun for an assassin, an X-ray lockpicking system for a confiscator, and a special tracking system for an investigator are some basic examples of this sort of special gear. This gives them an idea of the rigors that lie ahead. If giving out special equipment would in some way interfere with your campaign's balance, I suggest that you give your agents a pay raise upon joining your agency. This raise should be fairly small, about $100-300 a mission, but enough to make a difference in their lives.

When giving agents benefits or perks, you should consider each one carefully. These perks should be small things that make up for or prepare your agents for the nastiness to come. It is very easy to get carried away and start giving agents all sorts of things they haven't earned. A word of warning: NEVER give agents extra experience points because they belong to an elite agency. Giving out extra, unearned points for this reason can really mess up a good campaign as agents' levels skyrocket. These points represent what an agent learns from a mission. This learning remains constant and cannot be changed just because an agent changes agencies.

Complicated matters

Now that you've given your agents some benefits, it's time to give them the bad news. To counterbalance these perks, you should assign some complications to your elite agency. While you have as free a hand when assigning complications as you did while assigning perks, there are two complications that are inherent to all elite agencies. The first one is very simple. Since these agencies are all super-secret, no other intelligence agencies (even agencies from the elite group's own country) know about them. This means that there are *no allies* for any elite agency. Should agents from any other intelligence agency run into agents from one of your elite groups, the other agents may assume that your agents are *enemy* agents and act accordingly. When working with other agents, it will be necessary for your agents to pose as members of a group that is friendly to the other agents.

Another complication I consider essential for elite agencies is a lack of field support. Since all elite agencies are small, they often don't have the personnel necessary to set up and maintain a world-wide support system for their agents. While elite agents are often given the best briefings in the espionage business and have access to some of the best gear available, they will more often than not be left to their own devices in the field. For example, my elite agency has a station house in every world capitol, and some safe houses in other large cities, but that's it. Each station house has a small stock of small arms and ammunition on hand, along with communications gear for contacting their main headquarters. Agents can receive messages and dossiers here, but not much else. This means that agents will have to find any gear they might need during the course of a mission on the local black market. If you want, you can give a team of agents the name of an arms dealer in the city your mission involves. This will give you a chance to play some NPCs and have fun with your agents. Arms dealers are known to drive hard bargains. . . .

The two complications I have detailed above should be inherent to any elite agency you create. When designing your own complications, keep in mind that they should be little things that get in your agents' collective way, but don't necessarily harm them. A good rule of thumb is to make each complication counterbalance a perk. For example, if you decide that every agent who joins your agency should receive a car, your complication could be that because of a lack of transportation money, agents must pay for their car's shipping to the job site. If you raise your agents' pay, you could increase the cost of gear purchased from the agency as a complication. Just use your common sense when assigning both benefits and complications. If you feel a complication or perk upsets the balance, flow, or feel of your campaign, don't use it!

Using elite agencies

Now that you've created an elite agency, the question "What do I do with this monster?" might spring to mind. Never fear! While an elite agency can be used on a single-mission basis, its true flavor and elite status really comes out in campaign play. Of course, a campaign shouldn't start out as an elite campaign for your team. When you start a campaign, assign your agents to a regular agency and wait. Once an agent of elite quality reaches your entry level and has demonstrated his playing ability, contact him as suggested above. Fake the death of this agent, change the agent's name and appearance if you wish, and return him to your campaign as an agent on loan from another agency (don't tell the players which one). At the same time you might want to have your new elite agent keep an eye on the other agents and report their progress to you. Keep this up until all the agents you have selected as elite material have had a chance to join your group. Then the real fun begins.

Designing missions and campaigns for elite agencies isn't as hard as one might think, but it comes close. One of the easiest ways to design elite missions is to pretend that your players' agents are two levels higher than they really are and proceed accordingly. If you usually have four enemy agents working against four PC agents, for example, you could increase the number of enemies to six. Or, you could keep the number of enemy agents at four but arm them with submachine guns instead of pistols. It is also possible to add another group of NPCs with a goal similar to that of your agents. If you sent two elite agents to recover a packet of papers four KGB agents have stolen, you may decide that the CIA would have learned about the papers and sent a team of three agents to recover them. Now, instead of having to deal with only four agents, your team is confronted by seven, three of whom are also American CIA operatives!

As elite agents advance in levels, the missions given them should also increase in difficulty. In addition, you should begin using a rather devious creation known as a plot twist. All a plot twist boils down to is a plot within a plot. Most espionage fiction makes use of plot twists in some form or another, so good examples aren't hard to locate. The James Bond novels by Ian Fleming are good places to find rather far-flung examples of plot twists (see *Thunderball* and *From Russia with Love* for two good ones). For readers who might need some help getting started, a brief description of a simple plot twist follows: A two-man team of elite agents is given the mission described above: recover stolen papers. But, when they recover the papers, they find that two of them, dealing with Secret Service operations, are missing. They manage to persuade one of the KGB agents to tell them who now possesses the papers. Following up on that lead, the team stumbles onto a dastardly plot to kill the President of the United States.

While the above is a very simple example of a plot twist, it should give you an idea about how to set them up. All that you, as Admin, need to do is come up with a basic plot, and add on a more complex and dangerous plot that the agents discover at some point during the assigned mission. Should they prove reluctant to follow up on your inner plot, simply have headquarters contact them and order them to follow up on their new lead — or let the chips fall where they may.

The competition

Now that you have an idea of what kinds of missions to design for your elite agency, it's time to look at the enemies of your elite agents. The "bad guys" in an elite campaign must be a cut above the ordinary villains used in a regular TOP SECRET game campaign. One way to handle this is to design an enemy elite agency and have your players' agents go up against it. Or, you could come up with individual villains for your agents to tackle. In either case, the following guidelines should be used when you design villains:

1. Give each villain a distinct personality. While the usual enemy agent in a black leather trench coat might work in a normal campaign, the same agent simply won't do in an elite campaign. It doesn't matter if your villain is an elite enemy agent, a suicidal terrorist, or a mad scientist. Give each one motives, interests, likes, dislikes, and habits. One thing that should be common to all your villains is a strong desire for revenge. True elite villains don't like to lose and will stop at nothing to hurt those who hurt them.

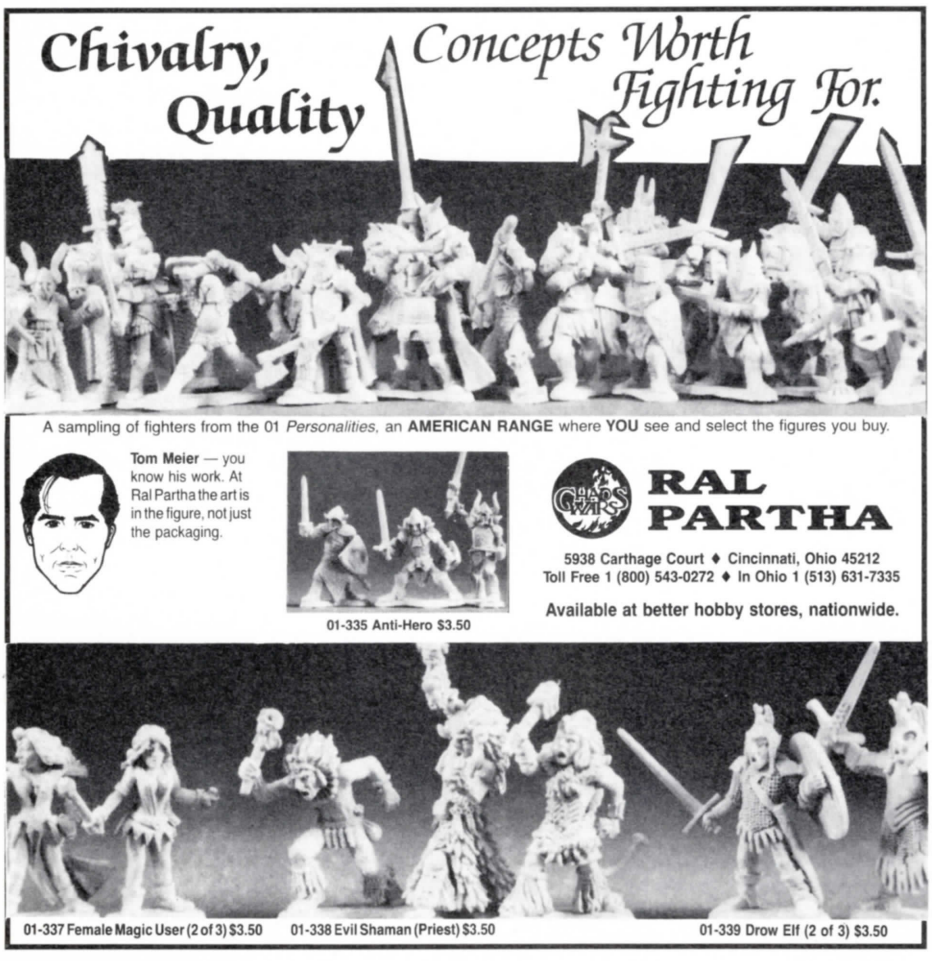
2. Use some repeating villains. This is essential if you decide to pit an elite agency against an elite agency. The desire for revenge mentioned above comes into its own here. Whole missions can be planned around a villain's attempts to make the agents or their agency pay for foiling his plans! To facilitate this, you should make every effort to give your villains at least two escape routes in every mission. This also cuts down on the number of villains you have to create in the course of a campaign.

3. Make your villains at least equal to your agents in power and ability. This point cannot be stressed enough. Since the agents are supposed to be elite, the villains you send out against them should be at least as good if not better than the agents themselves. This can be difficult, since some Admins (this author included) occasionally have trouble deciding if they want to kill off their PCs or give them an easy ride. One method I have used successfully to correct this is what I call "+2." All that means is that if, for example, your agents are fourth level, the main villain should be sixth level (or the equivalent). This keeps both you and your players honest.

4. You should secretly assign one NPC to each agent at the start of an elite campaign as his personal enemy. That NPC could be encountered at any point during the campaign (i.e., right away or saved for later). In any case, this enemy must be roughly equal to the player's agent in all abilities and traits. There should be a plausible reason for this rivalry (e.g., the PC killed a friend of the NPC agent), but the exact reason need be important only to the NPC. It is very possible that the player in question would never know the real reason for the rivalry. Adding such rivalries opens many paths for the creative Administrator. Special missions can be created for a particular player that revolve around his agent's particular rival. A whole elite agency can be uncovered because an agent's enemy managed to learn about the secret organization that the PC agent works for. The possibilities are almost unlimited.

Now that you have the four steps to creating the perfect villain, what do you do with them? The following is a villain created using the above steps. By day, Mark Hollten is a respected member of the New York financial community. His hobbies include tennis, yachting, chess, and military history. His birthplace is unknown, but he is 39 years old and of European origin. Hollten is unmarried and seems uninterested in dating. On Wall Street, he is known for his cool head when things get rough.

Mark Hollten is in fact Manfred Holbach, the leader of the White Brotherhood, a neo-Nazi group. Holbach was born in Berlin just days before Soviet troops entered the city. Seeing the danger, Holbach's mother escaped with her baby to Brazil. From there, she came to New York and married Jeffery Hollten. Holbach learned about Hitler and his "Thousand Year Reich" from his mother, a hard-core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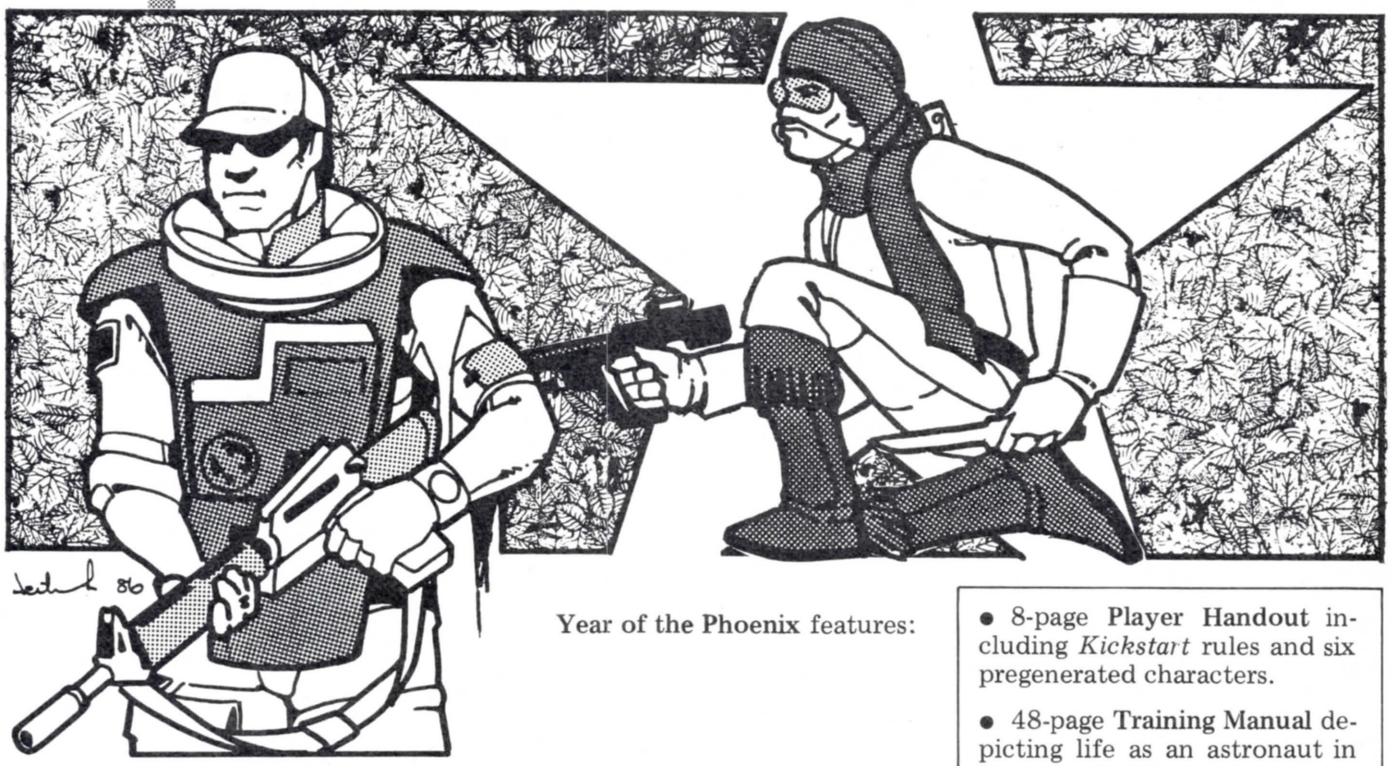

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Nazi herself, and decided that if a half-baked Austrian corporal could do it, so could he.

In game terms, Holbach is an eighth-level assassin. He is almost mad for power, but this madness doesn't cloud his thinking. Due to certain events, Holbach has grown to hate a sixth-level confiscator in my campaign. Holbach has tried to kill her four times without success.

As can be seen from all the above, designing an elite agency and a campaign for that agency is not all that easy. The process of selecting agents to join your agency can take up to two months of playing. Once this is done, though, you and your players are in for the role-playing experience of your lives! I've been running an elite campaign for almost one year, and I've found that both the standard of play and the standard of Admin ability rise greatly. Your missions challenge your players to do their best, and their best in turn challenges you to design better and better missions.

As I have stated throughout this article, the main ingredient to a successful elite campaign is in getting motivated, carefully selected agents; hence, the entry level concept. If you have any doubts about an agent's ability, don't ask him to join your elite group. This can result in your running two campaigns at one time, but all the extra effort and time invested in an elite campaign is well worth it.

To help Admins get started, I've included a list of three elite agencies I've used in my campaign. One is designed for American agents, one for European agents, and one for Soviet agents. These agencies are listed in the same format used in DRAGON® issues #93 and 97-99, but with a few additional headings. These are explained below:

Command: Who runs the agency in the country of origin.

Entry: The level required to enter the agency in question.

Benefits: What agents get for joining.

Complications: Inherent problems in the agency.

Covert Action Group (CAG)

Nature of agency: Highly secret U.S. government special operations group.

Governing body: None, but see Command below.

Personnel: Highly classified, but believed to be in the low to mid-thousands (1,000-4,000).

Annual budget: Also classified; believed to be around $500 million.

HQ: New York City, New York, U.S.A. (front company is International Software, Ltd.).

Established: Not known, but believed to be 1975.

Activities: Covert Action Group exists mainly to carry out special missions the United States government does not wish to be associated with. Thus, it is involved in both domestic and foreign counterintelligence. CAG does not gather intelligence as such, so it relies on what it can get from other agencies. However, CAG has one of the best systems for tracking enemy agents in the world.

Policies: CAG exists to carry out special missions, so the security of the organization is a prime concern. Entire missions are often organized to silence people who know too much about CAG. Agents of CAG are also encouraged to use nonviolent methods whenever possible. CAG agents often work alone.

Objectives: CAG's first priority is to carry out any and all missions assigned to it. It also attempts to remove potential terrorists from circulation before they can do any harm.

Areas of involvement: Worldwide.

Allies: None.

Additional data: CAG has station houses in the capitol cities of all major nations and some safe houses in other large cities. These stations can provide agents with small arms, ammunition, and communications gear only.

Bureaus: All.

Alignment profile: 01-19/07-94/07-81.

Command: Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Defense, U.S.A.

Benefits: Special equipment (one device on entry), $100 per mission pay raise.

Complications: Lack of field support, all gear purchased from the agency costs $50 over book price.

Entry: Third level.

European National Economic Command (ENECOM)

Nature of agency: Pan-European special missions group.

Governing body: None, but see Command below.

Personnel: Classified, but known to be in the mid-thousands (1,000-5,000).

Annual budget: Believed to be around $500 million.

HQ: Frankfurt, West Germany (front company is Anglo-German Design Institute).

Established: Sometime in the mid-1970s.

Activities: ENECOM carries out special missions that the member nations (Great Britain, West Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Norway, Sweden, and Austria) decide are in their best interests. ENECOM is involved in both domestic and foreign counterintelligence. ENECOM has been very successful at both planning and carrying out assassinations. ENECOM gathers its own intelligence as it is needed.

Policies: ENECOM agents kill only when it is necessary. They are just as security minded as CAG (see above). They also like to make very thorough operations plans before sending any agents into the field. ENECOM likes to use teams of two agents when it is possible to do so.

Objectives: To maintain Europe's place in the international power structure, ENECOM will attempt to carry out any mission assigned to it. ENECOM also attempts to control industrial espionage whenever possible. Organized crime is high on ENECOM's list of main enemies.

Areas of involvement: Worldwide.

Allies: None.

Bureaus: All.

Alignment profile: 01-81/07-94/07-94.

Command: A special committee composed of the Prime Ministers of the member nations.

Benefits: $200 per mission pay raise; special equipment is available on entry (no device given).

Complications: Lack of field support, all gear purchased from agency costs $100 over book price.

Entry: Third level.

Additional data: Agents of ENECOM often pose as members of Interpol. Their network of stations is similar to that of CAG (see above).

Political Action Section (D-4)

Nature of Agency: Highly secret Soviet special agency.

Governing body: None, but see Command below.

Personnel: Estimated to be in the mid-thousands.

Annual budget: Estimated to be around $1 billion.

HQ: Leningrad, Russian SSR, U.S.S.R.

Established: Unknown.

Activities: D-4 carries out special missions assigned to it by the General Secretary of the Communist Party. Its agents are involved in both domestic and foreign counterintelligence. D-4 also exists to watch the other Soviet intelligence agencies (KGB and GRU) and report their progress. D-4 has access to any information gained by these groups, so it doesn't need to collect its own intelligence very often.

Policies: D-4 will ruthlessly carry out any mission assigned to it. D-4 has blanket authority inside the Soviet Union, so it is especially ruthless at home. These agents will kill anyone who reveals their existence. D-4 agents often work alone, but a team of three is the accepted number of agents to be used on any mission.

Objectives: D-4 exists to prevent a counterrevolution or the fall of the Soviet government by any means. It acts swiftly and ruthlessly to smash any threat to the homeland. It will attempt to carry out *any* mission assigned to it.

Areas of involvement: Worldwide.

Allies: None.

Additional data: D-4's station network is similar to that used by CAG (see above). D-4's agents often pose as members of another country's intelligence agencies. They often kill themselves rather than surrender.

Bureaus: All.

Alignment profile: 20-94/07-00/20-00

Command: General Secretary, CPSU.

Benefits: 1 special device upon entry.

Complications: Lack of field support.

Entry: Third level. Ω

CLAY-O-RAMA

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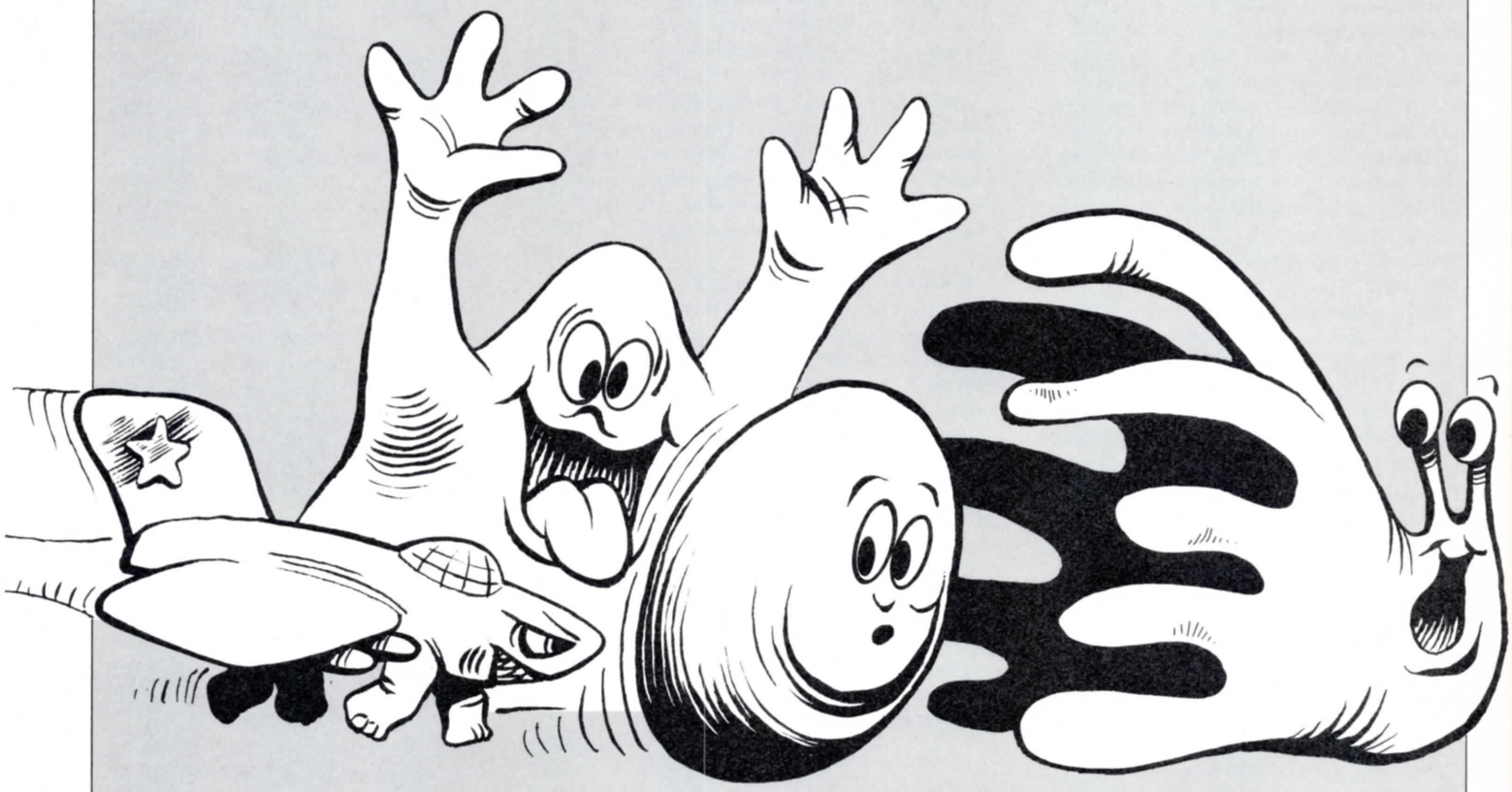

by David "Zeb" Cook

The Giant Blue Bowling Ball slowly rolled across the battlefield toward the Neon Orange Thing with the big floppy mouth and writhing mass of tentacles. Desperately, the Neon Orange Thing hurled pellets at the ball as it came relentlessly forward.

Then there was a flash, and a Four-Legged Red Jet plowed into the rear of the Bowling Ball, cracking the ball's surface. The Neon Orange Thing, sensing a kill, closed in. Panicked, the Bowling Ball whipped around, flattening one of the wings of the Red Jet. The Orange Thing lashed out with its tentacles, grasping the ball firmly. With a mighty heave, the Orange Thing hurled the Bowling Ball into the air. It sailed up and hurled down, splitting into pieces as it hit the ground.

Turning from the destruction, the Red Jet grinned as it sighted the Orange Thing. "Feeling lucky today?" it asked — and charged.

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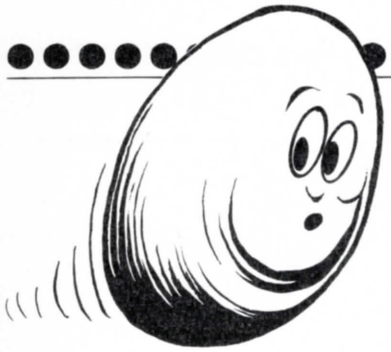

What is a Clay-O-Rama?

A Clay-O-Rama is many things. It is a chance for friends to meet and have a good time. It can be a serious philosophical discussion on the meaning of modeling clay. It is a means of artistic expression. It is a ritualistic gathering of Claydonians to watch the violent destruction of others of their species. But, most of all, it is a silly game involving modeling-clay miniatures.

What do I need to have a Clay-O-Rama?

First, you need a group of people willing to be silly and have fun playing with modeling clay. Next, you need these rules or something like them. Then, you need pencils, paper, and numerous six-sided dice for each player. Finally, you need one can of modeling clay for each player. Utterly unscientific testing has shown that PLAY-DOH® Modeling Compound is well suited for use in a Clay-O-Rama. It is easily shaped, comes packaged in the proper amounts, and has pleasing, brilliant colors.

How do I create a Claydonian?

After you have assembled the items listed above, find a large smooth space on which to play. This could be several tables pushed together or a smooth tile floor. Do not play in a place where you do not want to have bits of modeling clay about. After you have found a place to play and have assembled your friends, give each one a can of modeling clay. Try to let each player have the color he or she wants. After giving out the clay, tell the players the following:

> "You have twenty minutes in which to make a creature out of your modeling clay. You may create anything you want, so long as it does not collapse at the slightest touch. You do not have to use all of your clay; any clay you do not use may be shaped into missiles of any size and shape you want. You may not trade clay with another player; use your own clay. When you have finished making your Claydonian, let me know."

After telling your players this, let them go to it. Do not tell them any more about what will happen except that it will be a miniatures game. Encourage creativity. As each player finishes his or her creation, you must assign the creation its powers.

How do I assign powers?

There are six categories of powers that must be assigned to each Claydonian: *movement, number of attacks, "to hit" number, damage, hit points,* and *special powers.* Each one requires that you make a judgment about the creation of the player. The following are guidelines for assigning the powers; you may alter them as you see fit.

Movement: All movement is measured in spans of the player's outstretched hand (from tip of thumb to tip of little finger). The following table gives the basic movement rates.

Number of legs	Movement
0	1 span
1-2	2 spans
3-4	3 spans
5 or more	4 spans

Note that a "leg" is any type of movement-producing appendage the Claydonian might have, even if it is a wheel.

Number of attacks: Look at the creation carefully. How many limbs can it use for attacking? This is the number of attacks it can make each turn. However, this number should never be more than four.

Chance to hit: A Claydonian's basic chance to hit is 8 or greater on two six-sided dice. If the creature has big limbs or a big mouth, the chance to hit is reduced by one. If the creature has real big limbs or mouth, or it uses its entire body in an attack, reduce the chance to hit by two. You decide just how big is "big" or "real big."

Damage: The base damage done in any attack is one six-sided die's worth of points. If the limbs are large, one to two more dice may be added to this. If the limbs are very large, three more dice may be added. If the attack is an absolute killer, up to five dice may be added to the base attack die. As usual, you can decide all final attack values. If you're getting the idea that this is not a very exact game, you have the right idea. You're playing with clay monsters, right? Who needs to be exact?

Hit Points: Look at the creature and compare it to the amount of clay kept aside to use for missiles. If the entire can of clay was used to form the creature, it has 50 hit points. If half was used for missiles, the creature will have 25 hit points. Assign hit points based on the fraction of clay used to form missiles. If 25% of the clay is used for missiles, knock 25% off of 50 to find the creature's hit points. This is another judgment call on your part as the referee.

Special Powers: Each creation gets one special power. It may be from the list below, or it can be one you make up. If you make it up, it is recommended that you create a power that will affect modeling clay in some harmless way. The following powers may be assigned randomly by rolling a die or may be chosen by you to match the creature in some way.

1. *The Drop:* Made in place of one normal attack. If a hit is successfully made, you then lift the target into the air and drops it 3'. Afterwards, you can decide the amount of damage caused based on what happened.

2. *The Bowl:* This power works like the drop, except that you roll thetarget across the battlefield.

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3. *The Poke:* When a hit is made, you poke the target hard with your finger, making a nice hole in it. Then you decide the amount of damage.

4. *Reshape One Limb:* This power is used in place of a normal attack. If it hits successfully, the attacking player may alter the shape of any one limb of the target as he pleases. As referee, you should be ready to assign damage or altered powers because of this change.

5. *The Blob of Death:* This power may only be used by a creature with missiles. The player may designate one of the missiles to be his Blob of Death. It is fired like a normal missile (see "How does my Claydonian shoot?"). If it scores a hit, you should take your fist and give the target one solid smash to show the effects of the missile. After doing this, assign damage based on the consequences. Only one Blob of Death per game is allowed.

6. *Rip Limbs Off:* When the creature rolls an 11 or 12 on a normal attack, the player may tear one of his opponent's limbs off. Ah, that is, the player may tear off one of his *Claydonian's* opponent's limbs. Though this attack causes no damage to the target in terms of lost hit points, you should be ready to note any changes to the target's powers.

7. *Change Places:* In addition to a normal attack on a successful hit, creatures with this power may change places with any opponent on the board, or may change the places of any two other creatures on the board. The creature may not move in the same turn it uses this power.

8. *Move Out of Turn:* Creatures with this power may move at any initiative point in the turn. They simply announce that they wish to move. They may not move in the middle of another player's move.

9. *Use Opponent as Missile:* If all of an attacker's limb's hit a target, he may pick his target up and use it as a missile against a third opponent. The missile is fired normally, and you as referee should assess damage to both the missile and the target.

10. *Divide Self:* This power should only be given to creatures that can easily divide into two sections. Each half has half the powers of the normal creature at the time of division.

11. *Borrow Power:* In addition to all normal attacks, a successful hit by this creature allows it to use the special power belonging to the creature it hit, if the attacker wants to do so. The decision must be made immediately or the borrowed power will be lost until another successful hit is made. The player with this power should not be told what the powers of other creatures are; he can only learn this by observation.

You may create any other powers you can think of. However, be sure that none of them are dangerous to the players or any spectators watching the game.

How do I play the game?

Once all the players have created their Claydonians and have had powers assigned to them, have them gather around the playing area. Have the players space themselves at equal distances from each other. Each player should then roll three six-sided dice to find his or her initiative number. Ties should be rolled off. Be sure each player notes his initiative number. After this is done, explain the What Do I Do, How Do I Move, How Do I Shoot, How Do I Attack, and How Do I Win rules to the players. Once everyone understands what is going on, begin the game.

What do I do?

The Clay-O-Rama is played in turns. A player gets to move his creation once during each turn. At several points during a turn, a player may have the opportunity to attack. Each player takes his move in the order of the initiative rolls, going from highest to lowest. The sequence of a player's move is as follows:

1. Move your creation up to its full movement.

2. Fire up to three missiles at targets of your choice.

3. Attack any creature to which your Claydonian is adjacent, provided you have attacks left to do so.

4. The other player (or players) may counterattack against your creature, provided they have any attacks left.

Each player follows this sequence, in order of initiative, until the player is out of the game or the game is over.

How does my Claydonian move?

To move your creation, use your hand to measure the distance the Claydonian moves, starting from the front of the creature. If there is no discernible front, begin measuring in the direction the creature last moved. There is no terrain in the game (though you can add some if you like). Thus, except when turning, a creature will always be able to move up to its full movement.

Note that if some people feel that the hand-span measuring system is unfair or grossly inaccurate, you may then enforce the Uniformity Rule. The Uniformity Rule states that all distances will be measured by the referee's hand. However, this will slow down the play of the game and place a great deal of work in the hands of the referee (ahem).

If a part of a creation comes off during movement, the player is allowed to put that piece back on his creation at no penalty. Falling apart is best done under combat conditions.

How does my Claydonian shoot?

At the end of movement, each player is allowed to shoot up to three of his missiles. A missile may only be used once. After it is fired, it is removed from play. If a player does not have any missiles, he may not fire any.

To fire a missile, the player stands anywhere within 3-4' of his own position at the table. The player may not move to a different area of the battlefield; he must fire his missiles from the point where his creation began the game. After the player has his position, have him name his target (a specific Claydonian creation on the table). Players cannot attack a group of monsters; only one will do.

Have the player throw his missile, attempting to hit the target. Make it clear to the thrower that how hard the missile is thrown has NO effect on the amount of damage done. It is only the SIZE of the missile that matters. It is a wise idea to have someone stand directly opposite the thrower to catch long shots and bounces. If the thrower manages to hit his declared target, the missile has hit. If the thrower hits a different creature, the shot is a miss, no matter what happens. The attacked player is allowed to reattach any parts of his Claydonian that come off due to the missile's hits, unless a special power dictates otherwise. If the missile missed, the shot is no good.

If a missile hits its target, you must determine the amount of damage done by the missile. The base damage for a missile is one six-sided die for something about the size of a marble. Missiles smaller than this may do less damage. Missiles larger than this should do proportionately greater damage (up to five dice).

How does my Claydonian attack?

Each Claydonian is assigned a number of attacks it can make in one turn, based upon the number of manipulative limbs it has. These attacks can be used as attacks or counterattacks. If a creation has used all its attacks, it may not make any more attacks (or counterattacks) for the rest of the turn.

If your creation is adjacent to an enemy creation, you may decide to attack. "Adjacent" is defined as being within the reach of your creation's arms. You may attack as many times as you have attacks, provided you have not used any of your attacks to make counterattacks (see below).

To make an attack, you must announce your target and the dice of damage done by the attack (unless all of your attacks do the same amount of damage). Then roll two dice. If the dice roll is equal to or greater than your "to hit" number, you have hit your target with that attack.

After all attacks have been resolved against one target, count the number of dice of damage from all those successful attacks. Roll the dice and add them together to find the total amount of damage caused. The player whose creature was the target of the attack should subtract this amount from his creation's hit points. If the creation's hit points reach zero, the creation is dead (see below on what happens then).

How does my Claydonian counterattack?

A Claydonian may counterattack if it is attacked by another creation during the combat phase. To counterattack, the Claydonian must have a few attacks left and must survive the attacks of its opponent. It may only make attacks against the creation that just attacked it. The counterattacks are handled as if they were normal attacks. A Claydonian may use its special power in a counterattack.

What happens when my Claydonian dies?

Ah, this particular question has plagued the Claydonian philosophers for centuries. Several scurrilous theories have been presented, including the concepts of drying out or being eaten by small children and dogs. However, in watching the deaths of several Claydonians on the field of battle, a common belief has arisen. Most Claydonians feel that when one of their kind dies, a large hand reaches from the heavens and squeezes the Claydonian through its fingers. This act is almost always accompanied by a horrible scream that echoes through the heavens.

How do I win?

This depends on why you are playing this game in the first place. If you are playing to have fun, you win if you get really silly. If you are playing to be competitive and to beat out everyone else, you win if your creation is the last surviving Claydonian on the battlefield. Since only one person can win the second way, it's a lot nicer to play for the first reason.

These are the rules for the Clay-O-Rama. Take them, have fun with them, be inspired to the heights of silliness, or feed them to your dog. Enjoy! Ω

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3. Invulnerability/20
4. Flight: Max. airspeed = 279 mph, PR = 1/hr.
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Weight: 145 lbs.
Strength: 9
Endurance: 31
Agility: 12
Intelligence: 15
Charisma: 12
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Accuracy: +1
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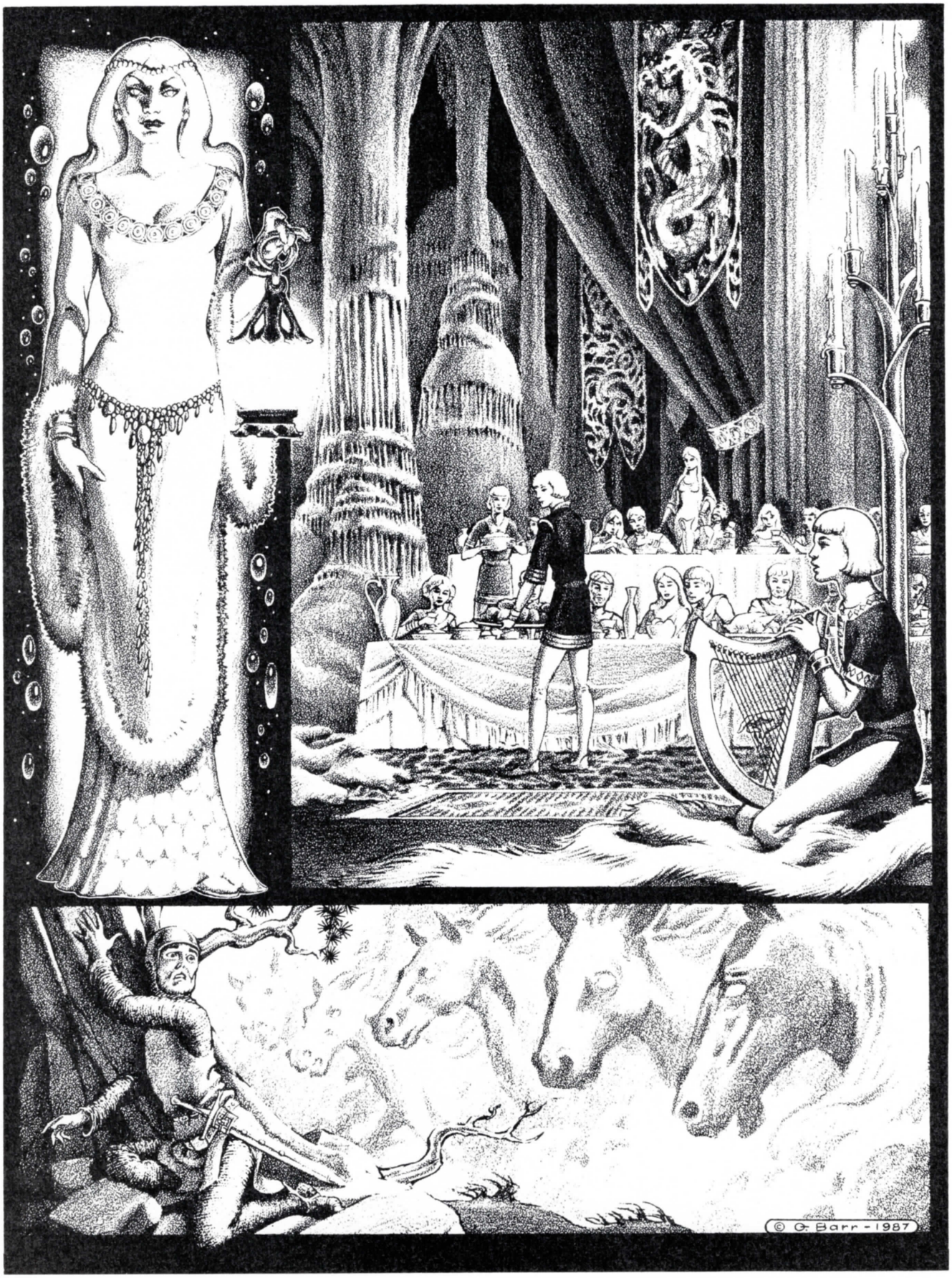
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The Passing of Kings

by Lois Tilton

Osric ducked under his shield as the Norman arrows shattered against it. Beside him, another Englishman in the shield wall fell, hands clawing the shaft in his throat as the blood spurted between his fingers.

Osric cursed the Normans as he shifted his position to cover the gap. "The Bastard must have resupplied his archers," he shouted to his foster-brother, Wulfstan.

The shield wall was still holding — they were Harold's housecarls who stood facing the Normans, but they were fewer now, and the line was getting thin.

Now another wave of horsemen was charging up the ridge toward them, and Osric tightened his grip on his war axe once more. The battle had been going on since midmorning, neither side yielding. The Normans were professionals at their work, and the housecarls, the heart of the English line, equally so. The core of the Norman force was its horsemen, while the English fought on foot. Yet the shield wall could stand against the horses, positioned as it was on the high ground of Sandlac ridge. It was the cursed bowmen who were killing them.

Defeating them. It was true, Osric thought, his war axe newly bloodied, the Normans once more beaten back. *We are losing this.* Eyes stinging with his own sweat beneath his helmet, he glanced over the English line, by now grievously reduced from the eight thousand that had marched to Hastings, no longer enough to take the offensive and charge the Norman positions. There was nothing left but to hold the line. And die.

Osric faced the fact stolidly. So, then, he would die here on this ridge, under the standards of the Dragon and the Fighting Man, defending his king. It would be well to do that. Only, let him cut down more Normans before he had to fall. *The Devil take those archers!*

Suddenly, there came a cry that chilled the hearts of all the English: "The king is hit!"

Osric could see Harold's banners still standing, but little else. The light was starting to leave the battlefield. And now the Normans were coming again!

But the shield wall could no longer hold the ridge. The English line was shortened, its flanks exposed. More horsemen were into it, swords and lances cutting a path toward the English center, toward the king. Osric tried to fight his way through, but there were more Normans coming up from behind, horse and foot both. Osric and Wulfstan were cut off. Back to back they stood against the assault with a half-dozen companions, wielding their terrible war axes.

Defiantly, they shouted their war cry, *Holycross!* Now, at last, the fighting was hand to hand. The Norman archers could no longer shoot lest they hit men on their own side, and the twilight was deepening.

There were other small knots of resistance where there had been a shield wall, where Harold's standards had been raised. And fallen. Osric felt the certainty like a blow — Harold Godwinesson was brought down. He could see Englishmen fleeing toward the shelter of the forest behind their line — the fyrdmen, the shire levies summoned by the king to the defense of his realm. The housecarls still

Illustrations by George Barr

held their positions as they fell.

Only a few Normans rode in pursuit. There were more of them busy stripping the dead than still trying to kill the English. At his back, Osric felt Wulfstan stagger, and turned to see his brother's shield fall clattering to the ground. He turned to view the battle. Resistance had already ceased at the center of the ridge. He let his own shield drop, and his heavy war axe.

"Come," he said, supporting his brother, "this fight is lost."

Wulfstan nodded, his jaw clenched tight on his pain, and they fled toward the forest, the deep, ancient Andredesweald, which had seen so many battles. Wulfstan was staggering badly; a couple of times he slipped and almost brought Osric down on top of him.

From behind them came the sound of hoofbeats. Osric wheeled, pulling free his sword, regretting his war axe, to face the oncoming rider. *Oh, God save me, my arm is weary!*

The ground was too wet for horses, and the beast coming toward them was foundering, spent, its rider more eager than prudent to be charging into the forest at nightfall. The horse went to its knees in a ditch, jolting the rider from the saddle, and Osric was on the Norman before he could get to his feet.

Osric got the shaken horse back up and boosted Wulfstan onto its back, then led them deeper into the trees, avoiding the London road where horsemen could run them down in the open. The night was moonless, the trees dark over their heads. The forest was English — it would be their refuge from the enemies of the realm. It did not seem strange to him that the forest could recognize its enemies. It had brought down the Norman knight.

"What now?" Wulfstan asked, once they had stopped and Osric was doing what he could with his brother's wounds.

"We've got to get to London. Resistance will gather there."

"You're certain the king was killed, then?"

"Aye, the Normans were gathering like crows." All the Godwinessons, the king and both his brothers, were dead.

"No use, then, staying to die with them," Wulfstan sighed.

"We will have another king!" Osric insisted. Only, who was there left? "The Atheling, Edgar, it may be."

His brother shrugged painfully. King Edward's nephew was still only a boy. Yet someone must take the crown, or it would be William's. *So let it be Edgar,* Osric thought. Then they would build up an army and drive the Norman back to his ships. Osric was too restless to tend his own injuries. He could not wait until they were out of these woods, back in London.

It was less than sixty miles from Hastings on the old Roman roads. They had marched it in two days, coming to the battle. But now they had to keep off those roads to stay clear of William's horsemen. And Wulfstan could hardly travel at the same pace, even on the Norman's horse. Still, they ought to reach London in a matter of days.

But Wulfstan's wound festered. At the end, he was too sick to be moved. Six days after the battle of Hastings, Osric, feverish from his own wounds, saw his foster-brother buried in the churchyard of a small monastery.

He gave the monks their first report of the battle, of the king's death.

"God's will be done," said the superior, his head bowed.

"No!" Osric protested. "Why would God will the Norman Bastard to rule England? By what right?"

"Perhaps as punishment for Harold's sins," said the monk. "Or the sins of all England. And did not you tell us yourself that William bore the banner of the Pope?"

Osric was uncomfortably silent, remembering then the king's words to William's envoy before the battle. Looking up toward heaven, Harold had declared, "Now it is for the Lord to choose the proper claimant to the kingdom."

But Osric was Harold's man. And if he hadn't died in the shield wall with his king, then he could still oppose his enemy. Realistically, he knew he had no choice. His land and position were forfeit if William came to the throne.

So he left the monastery the morning after burying Wulfstan, despite his worsening fever, certain that he could reach London by the next day.

But Osric had gone deep into the Andredesweald, the ancient forest, old before the Saxons had come to this land. And he was a stranger there. By nightfall, he was lost, dizzy with fever. He stumbled to a stream, where the water felt cool on his burning face. The horse wandered off during the night, and by daybreak he was barely sensible enough to crawl to the water.

Things were not clear after that. At some point, a villein found him and took him to a bed in his village. Osric woke there, sweat-soaked, weak, and naked, with his wounds bound up and a hollow in his belly.

The villagers, like the monks, were anxious for word of the fighting. "Our thegn, Godric, went with the fyrd, and his sons with him. Can you tell us if he lives?" they begged.

Osric could offer them no hope, and his heart sank to see their confusion. "What will become of us, then? Of our land?"

He could only say that, if William prevailed, they would surely have a Norman lord over them. Then he asked if any man would be willing to be his guide out of the forest.

"On *this* night?" they asked, with dread in their voices. "Can you not wait?"

"No! I have been delayed too long already."

But they would not stir from their hearths. So Osric set out for London alone. The fine weather of late October was passing, and sunset brought a chill wind that made him shiver and wrap his cloak more tightly.

He huddled for shelter among the trees. Night seemed to reach out for him with dark fingers. The wind began to rise, and ragged clouds raced across the angry face of the moon. The forest had a hundred voices, and Osric could hear the howling of distant wolves mingled with the wind.

He crossed himself, heart racing. What had the villeins meant — this night?

Then, from out of the darkness, he heard the faint sounds of horsemen approaching — harness chinking, muffled hoofbeats. Spectral cries floated on the wind. Osric would have welcomed the sight of Norman riders

now. Shaking, he backed up against the trunk of a massive oak. Its branches creaked in the wind — reaching for him!

He threw himself to the ground. The hoofbeats were thunder in the air. He rolled to his back, and there, in the sky above him, they rode on horses of cloud. Their eyes glared red in the moonlight, and their high-crested helmets and breastplates were gold. Each warrior held a spear, and swords were sheathed at their sides.

Osric ran in terror, blindly, from the eldritch host. Their war cries followed him, and he could feel the cold breath of their ghostly mounts on his neck. He fell more than once, heedless of his way, tangling himself in briars, even running headlong into the trunk of a tree.

At last shelter beckoned, the dark mouth of a cave in the side of a hill. Osric flung himself inside, stumbled, fell once more onto torn and bleeding knees, then knelt there in the darkness, gasping for breath.

Shadows flickered. He started and got to his feet with his sword drawn as the glimmer of a light approached from the back of the cave.

Glowing in the lamplight, she came into view. Osric gaped. Her gown was fur-trimmed green, belted with jewels, and silver hair floated down her back.

"Come," she said, "you are a guest in this hall. There is no need for weapons."

He stared at the sword he had forgotten he was holding, fumbled it back into its sheath. "Lady," he stammered witlessly. Her gaze was compelling.

"You may call me Arianrhod," she told him. The echo of her voice in the cavern rang like bells carved of ice. Her gaze at him was assessing, and Osric felt his face go hot. "I think you could use a good meal and some clean clothes. Perhaps, first, a bath? Come, take off your sword. And isn't that armor uncomfortable?"

There was something about the way the lamplight flickered that seemed to affect his mind. He shed his mail clumsily, then followed with no thought of resistance as she receded into the cavern. Around one turn of a corner, torchlights flared in wall brackets and the floor was carpeted. Another turn, and the floor and walls were bright with mosaic flowers.

Others of her kind waited there, who undressed him, led him to a steaming bath, washed him, and rubbed an ointment into his scars that made the aches dissolve.

Then he was brought new clothing, and even Osric's numbed brain had to wonder at its fineness. He had always been pleased with his looks, and now, dressed like a prince, his fair hair curling as it dried, he felt confident to return Arianrhod's openly inviting glances.

She led him to another room, this one paneled in carved wood and bright with candles, where a feast was laid out on a gleaming table. His hostess leaned low as she poured him dark wine into a golden cup. "Drink," she urged him, "eat. You are our guest."

Later, there was another room yet, where a crimson-draped bed was waiting, soft with goosedown. Arianrhod's gown dropped to the floor, and she lay back, holding her arms to him.

He could not tell how long he slept, only that she was gone when he woke. It would have been easier to believe it had all been a dream. He thought he might have preferred that, but the room was too real, and the bed, and the new garments folded on the chest. The scent of her lingered on his skin and made him tremble.

He dressed, noticing that his wounds were all healed and scarless now. He almost wished for them back. The candles, he saw, burned without melting. There was much, he thought, that he should have seen before. *Preserve me, Lord.*

The sounds of music and voices came from the corridor. Osric followed them and came to a great hall, where candles blazed and people were feasting, all dressed in garments as rich as the ones he was wearing.

He stood, stunned, in the entrance. The abundance of tapestries and carpets, silks and furs and jewels put the royal hall of England in a shadow. Then heads were turning in his direction as a green-gowned figure approached to take his hand. She looked like a queen, with a torc of gold around her throat.

"Is this Alfheim, then?" he whispered, torn between dread and awe.

Her laugh chimed. For the first time he was able to look directly into the silver mirrors of her eyes. "Your people have called it so. The British named this place Annwyn, the realm of the Fair Folk. But it is all the same."

She laughed again as Osric turned pale and crossed himself. Could he have died and gone to Hell?

"Now, come join the feast."

"No, I cannot stay here," he croaked desperately, trying not to look on the metallic surface of her eyes. "I . . . appreciate your hospitality, but I have to leave."

"I'm sorry, but that's impossible."

"No, you don't understand. King Harold is dead. I was one of his housecarls. William of Normandy will take the throne if we can't organize another army to oppose him!"

"I am afraid it is you who doesn't understand. Kingdoms and kings mean nothing to us. And you have taken our food and our wine, slept under our roof. You are bound to us, now, with the threefold bond.

"The door that you entered by is opened only once a year, at Samhain. Did you not know the night? You Christians call it the feast of All Saints, the Feast of the Dead, when the gates between the worlds lie open."

"I . . . no, I was sick. I lost track of the days. It was the feast of Pope Calixtus when we fought."

Osric backed into the corridor, but he couldn't find the way he had come. Arianrhod's hand on his arm restrained him, and he found himself being drawn back. "I have to go," he protested.

"There have been many battles," came a voice from behind them. "There will be many more, whether you are part of them or not."

"Artorius," Arianrhod said, turning with a smile, "this is our latest guest. But, of course, you have already met. Artorius is one of the riders of our Host," she explained to Osric, who swallowed uncomfortably, remembering his last sight of those riders, the night before.

"What you must understand," the man named Artorius went on, "is that men have invaded these shores for all time. It was six hundred years ago that Aelle the Saxon

defeated us — we fought in these same woods. Can you be surprised that your turn would come?"

"You . . . are British?" Osric stammered. The man had spoken as if he had been in that fight himself, as if six hundred years were days.

"I was warleader of the British kings. My name in that language is Arthur."

"Yes, and the Romans came before the Saxons," Arianrhod added, "and the British before them, and others still before the British."

Artorius — Arthur — gave her a small bow of acknowledgement. "It is so. Each invader replaces the last."

"Only we," said Arianrhod, "endure."

"What . . . who, then, are you?"

"We were mortals once, one of the earliest nations of Albion. But when our enemies would have overwhelmed us, we decided not to fight back — not their way. There were sacrifices we had to make, but the realm of Annwyn will never lie open to conquest."

"Witchcraft!" Osric gasped, crossing himself.

A laugh acknowledged it. "And immortality.

"Oh, we have our vulnerabilities." Her laugh this time had bitter tones. "In our own time, weapons were bronze. There was little risk from the touch of iron. Now, of course, that hazard is greater. And we cannot easily endure the light of day. But secrecy is our best defense. For that reason, now that you have learned these things, we cannot let you go."

"But you need not fear to remain with us," added another voice. "You have my sister's favor."

"My brother Gwyn," said Arianrhod, "our king."

"Sire," Osric mumbled, not sure whether he should kneel to this eldritch ruler. A glance into Gwyn's silver eyes had left him dizzy. And had he been in the bed of a queen?

"You have a choice," the king was telling him. "You may stay with us, as one of our servants. In these halls, no one ages. Or, since you are a warrior and favored, there is another alternative. You could become one of us and ride with our Host."

"One of you?"

"Several of you mortals have chosen to join us. Artorius is one. It is only this way that we can retain our numbers. There will be no more children of our own race."

"I . . . I don't . . ."

"There is no need to decide now. However, there are some facts you must consider. In order to preserve our powers, it is necessary to renew the sacrifices from time to time. For that purpose, we hold a lottery among our servants when there is no other candidate for the Teind. But when a mortal chooses to join us, then he serves as the sacrifice."

"Sacrifice," Osric mumbled uncomprehendingly.

"I must also add, since it seems to matter to Christians, that once the ritual is done, there is no life of the soul after death. But, of course, that is mainly a concern for mortals."

Osric was horrified. "Even this world shall pass away, but the kingdom of heaven endureth forever," he whispered.

"You all say something like that. Well, the choice is yours. And you will be our guest until it is time."

The king of Annwyn went up to his seat, and his sister drew Osric to a table and pressed a cup of wine into his hand. It burned like poison as it spread through his veins.

Time in the realm below passed at a dream-like pace. Osric was tormented with frustration, knowing that England's events were passing him by. Though the Fair Folk had only scant interest in such matters, news did come that the English had mustered no serious opposition to the Norman duke's claim on their kingdom.

It was from the Host that Osric learned most of what was happening in the land. They were drawn to ride out by the sounds of warfare, by the calling of the crows on the battlefield. These days, as William laid his hand on the kingdom he claimed, they rode often. Osric's spirit ached each time he was left behind.

Not even his hours of pleasure in Arianrhod's bed could ease his restlessness. She chided him, "Have you some mortal lover in the world above? Think — soon she will be wrinkled, then dust. We have left all that behind. And so could you."

"No lover," he replied, thinking that her words would have brought him no comfort if there were.

"But what, then? Is is still the Normans? William has the English crown, and your Harold Godwinesson is cold in his grave. You cannot turn back time."

The Briton, Artorius, said the same. Osric would marvel that he was speaking to a legend.

"The stories say that King Arthur sleeps in the Hollow Hills. But, another thing they say — that you will return, to fight against the enemies of Britain."

Artorius sighed. "Those tales."

"They are only tales, then?"

"Oh, I went back. I fought again. But you can see how much good it did. Maybe it stopped them for a few years, but your ancestors took the land in the end. It was like trying to hold back the tides of the sea."

"But, then, it is true! You can return!"

"Yes, there are ways for those in the world above to summon us. Christians, now, have mostly forgotten them. But not all in my day were Christians. At that time, as I said, it seemed worth the cost. Now, well, I have seen the tides come and go too many times. As you will, if you join us."

Osric slammed his fist into the carved arm of his seat. "I never asked to live forever! I would have died to save the crown for England. Perhaps I should have died with the king, and this is my damnation!"

Artorius shook his head and turned back to his lady, Morgan, while Osric stared gloomily into the fire. His life, yes, he would give if he could strike back at the Normans once more. He had left the battle only when it was clear there was nothing more to be done. He would give his life, still, if that could be changed.

But his soul? And that would be the cost, would it not be? Would he pay it for the chance to be summoned back to the world above, to fight the Normans once again?

Such were his thoughts when King Gwyn finally summoned him. "The Teind is owing. It is time for the sacrifice, if you would join us. Otherwise, your name will enter

the lottery."

At no risk to his soul. Only, if he were the chosen, then his chance to return to the world would be forever lost. A bitter death that would be.

Too bitter. He had decided without realizing it. "I will join you," he said.

The king's brows rose in surprise. He raised his hand in salute.

Arianrhod, standing behind him, smiled with satisfaction for a brief moment. She was dressed in a gown of red that left her arms and breasts bare. Serpents of gold were coiled around her throat and wrists. She was utterly pagan, like a priestess of ancient times. Or a goddess. Power shone from her eyes.

Osric was suddenly afraid. He had witnessed the sacraments of the Church, yet he had never felt the presence of power as he felt it now. He thought to retract his choice, but his throat seemed paralyzed.

The king and queen each took one of his arms and led him from the hall, the rest of the Fair Folk behind them, through corridors that he had never seen. Finally, they brought him to a chamber with walls the rough, grey rock of a natural cavern, chill and beaded with moisture. In the center stood a low altar of stone.

Osric desperately wanted to cross himself, but did not dare. His garments were taken from him, and he was laid naked on the cold slab. There were channels cut into it. He could guess their purpose.

All of them standing around him had been through this, he tried to convince himself. Artorius had lain here. Unless it had all been a lie, to bring him willing to the sacrifice.

Arianrhod made an invocation in a language long dead in the world above, a knife of stone upraised in her hands. Her voice rang from the stone walls. She bent down to the altar. She spoke something as the stone blade sliced across his wrist. He hadn't thought that stone could be so sharp.

The knife was dark with his blood as she came to the other side of the altar and brought it down to his other wrist. Five times the knife cut — his wrists, his thighs. The pain was not so much. He had known worse, in battle. This was only his life he was feeling, ebbing away with each heartbeat. He was so cold. . . .

Last of all, Arianrhod drew the blade across his throat. His blood had drenched her hands and arms, her breasts. His vision of her grew dim.

Then he could see clearly again, and the pain was gone. He was looking down at the pale, blood-spattered figure of a man on a stone slab. A woman bent over him, and she was taking a drop of the blood, doing something with it. Then she was going from one to another of the people standing around her, pressing her bloodstained hand to their lips.

But he was no longer concerned with such things. He was moving, more and more swiftly, toward a light, and the light was the source of such warmth, such rapture, that he longed to flow into it, to be absorbed into its glow.

There was an instant when he was part of the light. And then he was wrenched away, into the stark chill solitude of life. His soul howled, for the light was closed to him forever. Such was his damnation, the price of immortality.

Hands were on him, words were being spoken. His heart was pumping new blood through his veins.

Puzzled, he opened his eyes, made himself raise his head. He had been lying in a great cauldron full of liquid. Slowly, he sat up, lifted his hand to his throat, held it out to stare at his wrist. The five wounds were healed. He had been dead and brought back to life. A miracle, then.

They gave him weapons and armor of bronze. He had a mount of night and storm to ride, with lightning in its eyes. Out into the world above he rode with the Host of Annwyn, drawn by the clash of war.

Their speed was the wind. The forests and downs were their hunting grounds, the wild, unsettled land. The cities of mortal men drained their power. They could not pass close enough to Romney and Dover for Osric to witness the destruction William had made of those towns, but his path was clear enough along the coast — the burned-out villages, the empty fields, the homeless refugees shuddering below in terror as the Host passed by in the night.

They rode wide. When the North rose in rebellion, Osric was witness to the waste that William made in retribution. He rode above the fields of dead along the Welsh border. Unable to join them, he saw Hereward's men striking back at the occupation from their stronghold in the fens.

Seasons turned, and he rode at Samhain as the gates of Annwyn lay open to the world above.

Seasons turned, and the resistance slowly died, the rebels either killed or reconciled to the conqueror.

Seasons turned, and Osric slowly learned the mysteries of Annwyn, witnessed its rites. When the time for the Teind came again, he stood with the others at the stone altar, had Arianrhod's bloody hand pressed to his lips as the soul of the sacrifice ascended to the light.

By the time William's son took his throne, Osric knew the secret he had sought, and now he rode at night with a horn at his side. William Rufus was even greater in cruelty than his sire the conqueror, though in nothing else. Wherever the Host would ride, Osric could see the corpses hanging in chains, could hear the cries of his mutilated victims.

And wherever the oppression of the Norman was felt, whenever Osric could ride freely in the world above, he would approach men to offer his secret.

"I can show you how to summon aid," he would tell them. But mortal men dreaded the dark powers of the realm below even more than they feared the Norman king. Such witchcraft as Osric described was perilous to their souls. His quest was unrewarded until the night he came to the hut of a charcoal burner named Purkis, deep in the New Forest.

The New Forest was an ancient royal hunting preserve, at least as old as the Andredesweald. The conqueror had reserved it for his own sport, expelling the populations of dozens of villages.

The charcoal burner fingered Osric's horn and stared directly at the unreflecting surface of his eyes. "I think this is witchcraft," he said, "but why should I care? The Norman king burned my village and drove us out. His soldiers raped my wife, and she died of it. And last year, his foresters blinded my brother and took off his hand for

poaching the deer. Tell me what to do."

Osric's time in the world above was limited. The pull of Annwyn drew him back. He waited in the realm below, restless, anxious. The charcoal burner would have only one chance to try the spell. If fear got the better of him, if he made a mistake, the opportunity would be lost. Arianrhod observed him pacing the hall and enticed him to her bed. He went, as much to distract himself from the waiting as anything else. She stroked his hair with her white hand. "You are one of us, now. Can't you forget the troubles of the world above? Close your eyes, and they will all be past in a moment."

Osric closed his eyes, but his mind remained elsewhere.

Finally, there came the sound of a horn, audible to his ears alone. He left his table in the king's hall, unheeded by the others.

The horn sounded again, and yet a third time. At that tone, the gates of Annwyn flew open. Osric mounted his steed and rode on the back of a storm toward the New Forest.

The charcoal burner waited, glancing nervously over his shoulder at the nighttime shadows. He crossed himself as the sudden storm cloud approached. The horn lay at his feet.

Osric took it up and hung it on his belt. "Then I did it right?" Purkis asked.

"Aye. I am free to remain in the world until the task is discharged. What exactly, did you request?"

"The king is hunting in the forest," said Purkis. "He lies at Brockenhurst tonight, but he rides out during the day. If the weather stays fine, he should come tomorrow."

"And my task?"

"To kill him. What else? To kill the Norman king."

Osric had forgotten how beautiful the woods could be in the daylight. It was August. The summer was at its peak, and Samhain months away.

It was late afternoon before he spotted the riders. His attention was drawn immediately to a fair-haired young man. He watched him dismount, leaving his bow on the saddle. This felt almost, but not quite, like his target. William Rufus was fair, too, but his hair was long. This one had the short-cropped hair of the conqueror. Yet he had the feel of a king, and the others deferred to him, naming him Henry. It was old William's youngest whelp, then.

Cloaking himself in invisibility as he had learned, Osric spirited the prince's bow and quiver from his saddle. He was beginning to feel another presence drawing near: William Rufus, the Norman king, come hunting his deer.

The hunters were concealed in the trees as a pair of stags entered the clearing. The king was blond, with the florid complexion that had given him his name. He drew back his bow and hit the first animal, but it bounded away.

Now a second hunter was taking aim. Osric put one of the stolen arrows to his own bow, careful not to touch the lethal iron of its tip. This time, the bowman would be English, the prey Norman. *Oh, yes, this is fitting!*

William Rufus was already falling to the ground as his companion missed the second deer.

"God save us all, Wat, you've shot the king!"

"No! No, I couldn't have!"

They were gathered around the body, almost incoherent with shock and terror. The man named Wat was shaking with it. To have killed the king, no matter what his intention, would surely be his death.

"Have you searched the area?" It was the king's brother, Henry, who had come onto the scene. Now he took command, kneeling there by the body of the dead king. Osric watched unseen as men began to hunt for an assassin.

"Wait." Henry stopped the man who shot the second arrow. "Wat, you were my brother's friend. I don't believe you would murder him. The throne is mine, now. All I have to do is take it. Unless, Wat, unless men have reason to believe this was my doing. But if you are suspect, then I will not be."

"No, my lord . . ."

"Wat, this purse is full of gold. I want you to take it and ride as fast as you can to the nearest port. I am not asking you to confess. And there will be no pursuit. You can go free, if you go now."

The unfortunate Wat took the gold and ran to his horse Henry spurred his own in the direction of Winchester, where the royal treasury lay. Osric was left alone with the body of the conqueror's heir as night crept into the forest.

A mist came and took the shape of Arianrhod. She spared an instant to glance at what lay on the ground. "So, you have done what you always wished. Now it is time to return to us."

"No. Not as long as there is still a Norman king."

She struck him. Power flashed in her eyes. "You are bound," she said. "I command you, return."

He knew her power, but he was summoned to the world

above to kill the Norman king, and a Norman king still lived in Henry. He had the power to resist her.

She felt it, and her voice softened with regret. "One last time, I ask you, come back with me. Our survival is too precarious. We cannot let you go."

"And I cannot stay with you, in your feasting hall, in you bed — not while these Normans are alive in England."

"Not even to live forever?"

"Not even for that."

"So. I gave you immortality. Now I take it back." From around her neck she took a drop of crystal, with a single drop of blood at its heart, and crushed it between her fingers.

Osric's heartbeat went still. He sighed as he fell into the darkness.

There were two bodies in the clearing when the charcoal burner came in his cart at dusk. "I did not know the cost," he whispered to one of them.

The body of the king he took to Winchester, but Osric he buried in the churchyard of the deserted village that had been his home.

To that grave the queen of Annwyn came, still with a drop of tender regret for the stubborn Saxon lover she had to sacrifice. A single tear fell onto the fresh earth of the mound.

And from it a rosebush grew, a rose with petals the color of fresh-spilled blood, which bloomed even in the darkest months of winter.

Word of the miracle spread, and soon pilgrims were making their way to the grave of the saint in the forest. A small shrine was built, and there was talk of establishing a monastery.

But the ecclesiastical authorities of the kingdom were opposed to the veneration of Saxon saints. Gradually, the pilgrims grew fewer. By the end of King Henry's reign, the forest had reclaimed the churchyard, and soon there was no one living who could remember where the grave might lie.

Ω

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Bazaar of the Bizarre

The Magical Maps of Greyhawk

by Lee Ian Wurn

Among the many lost and nearly forgotten treasures of Oerth are certain unique devices created in ages past by two sorcerers, Madd and Ztxar (pronounced "zar"). Though famed for their great skill at dweomercrafting, their only surviving works are a legendary set of magical maps, which have since been copied by others. The two men were known to have lived in the portion of the world presently called the Sea of Dust, prior to the Rain of Colorless Fire. During the holocaust, Madd fled with eight of the magical maps, though Ztxar perished with the rest of their works in the disaster.

After Madd escaped from the Rain of Colorless Fire, he settled down in an unknown city and led a peaceful life, teaching magical arts and experimenting with various forms of magic. A month before his death, Madd completed the creation of a new magical map and added it to the other eight in his collection. Sensing that his end was near, he handed his maps to his favorite apprentice, an intelligent fellow named Dane. This lad then retreated to a reclusive life, during which he mastered the techniques of duplicating magical items. Applying these techniques to the maps, Dane was successful in duplicating them all.

Following news of his success, magic-users from all over the Flanaess came to see Dane, begging him to sell them the duplicates of the maps. Dane refused to do so and asked all the magic-users to leave. Soon after, he disappeared altogether with the maps and all their duplicates. What became of Dane and the original maps thereafter remains a mystery — but duplicates of his maps have appeared on occasion, and the duplicates have themselves been duplicated time and again. Because some of them have surfaced in the Free City of Greyhawk, these maps are generally called the Magical Maps of Greyhawk.

Description and properties

All of the maps appear to be similar at first glance, but careful examination reveals that the inscriptions, designs, and handwriting are distinguishing characteristics for each. Each of the original maps is made from ancient parchment which is still in superb condition. The left end of each parchment is attached to an old, ornately carved, round wooden stick. Each end of the stick is embedded with one gem of roughly 1,000 gp in value. Replicas are similarly decorated; it has become a tradition in the creation of these maps.

The symbol of Madd is imprinted on the original maps, though some of these originals have probably been destroyed. Most of the first-generation replicas bear Dane's symbol, and other replicas made by Dane's disciples either bear their own symbols or have no symbol at all.

These maps have several common properties other than their individual functions (including those duplicates made by Dane). The first property is that the maps cannot be cut, burnt by normal fires, or destroyed in any way except through the use of a *rod of cancellation*, *Mordenkainen's disjunction*, magical fires of any sort, powerful magical items like artifacts, *wishes*, or through other means as noted below. A saving throw as per parchment at +6 vs. magical fire is applicable if subjected to magical flame. If this saving throw is failed, the whole map is burnt to ashes which have no special properties whatsoever.

The second property of the maps is that no runes, words, or inscriptions (magical or not) can be written on a map. If a *wish* spell or any other powerful magic, such as from an artifact, is used to write upon a map, a magical fire springs into existence, destroying the map. No saving throws are allowed. Other spells cannot harm the map.

Most of these maps have a limited number of magical charges placed into them during their creation. In order to use such a map, the bearer (who may be of any class or race) holds the map in his hands, looks at his surroundings, then utters a command word that expends a charge of the device. Each time a charge is used, a new diagram is created upon the map's surface, erasing any previous map diagram. None of the charges can be replaced; even a *wish* cannot recharge one of these maps. When all the charges of a map are used up, the map disintegrates into a powder. Every two days, the map erases itself. This erasure can also be voluntarily performed by the user before the two-day limit, using the command word.

Finally, the last property of the maps is that, whenever one of the maps is activated, the user (but no onlookers) must make a saving throw vs. death magic or be stunned for 1-10 rounds. During this period, the user simply stares at the map, unable to perform any other actions. Only *remove curse*, *dispel magic*, *negation*, *limited wish*, or *wish* can bring the user's state of mind back to normal during that

time. A charge is used, however, and the map functions normally. (Optionally, the Dungeon Master may have a charge spent but no map diagram appear in order to control the use of these maps.)

Brief descriptions of each magical map follow. Assume a 5% chance exists that a magical map found in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ fantasy setting is actually one of these maps.

Map of mapping

In a dungeon, this map records whatever the user is able to see, given normal illumination and no upper sighting limit. Upon command, the map changes its scale to a suitable size and is therefore able to map features over a great area. Everything is mapped the way the user sees it. For example, the illusion of a door is mapped as a door. If the illusion is discovered as such or dispelled, the *map of mapping* will not record it again for that user. Traps, hidden or invisible items, and living beings do not appear on the map. A concealed or secret door appears on the map only if located. To simulate this item's effect, the DM should sketch out an accurate (though limited) map for the players as they progress through an underground or interior environment, creating a new map with each charge expended (see below). Some maps of this sort may have more limited indoor mapping ranges (generally out to 120′ or so). Given the limited sighting ranges of most underground environments, this map is usually of limited use in dungeons and caves.

In the wilderness, the *map of mapping* records the area in a 10-mile radius, taking the spot the user is standing upon as the center. Again, illusions and concealed elements, such as *hallucinatory terrain*, are mapped as they appear. These "errors" disappear once the illusion is dispelled or discovered. The map only shows terrain features like forests, deserts, roads, tracks, cities, towns, villages, etc.; no living beings, vehicles, snares, or traps are mapped out. Then, too, only features that are immediately visible to the user are mapped (thus, the map is of limited use in a valley). This item has 30d4 charges.

Map of misleading

This map appears to be exactly the same as a *map of mapping* until it is used, but the map records many terrain features falsely. There is a 1% chance per level of any magic-user using an *identify* spell for the true nature of the map to be detected. Unless the user makes a saving throw vs. spells upon using a charge, he believes the map is entirely accurate, despite whatever sort of terrain he actually sees (the user believes the actual terrain to be an illusion or hallucination). Anyone besides the user who looks at the map is required to make a saving throw as above at +2 or fall under the map's spell. The map's user, of course, believes nothing contrary to his own delusions. Though the user does not resist having the map taken from him, the loss or destruction of the map will not cure his delusions of seeing doors which don't exist, walls in open spaces, etc. After a week, the user will not be able to function. Onlookers are similarly affected.

A *remove curse* followed by a *dispel magic* are required to ward off these ill effects. The *remove curse* should be cast on the person currently using the map. It affects everyone else under the map's spell if this is done; otherwise, only one onlooker is so freed from the map's power. The dispel magic spell then entirely removes the map's ill effects from any one victim (or from all at once if cast upon the map's user). If only the *remove curse* spell is cast on the victim, he returns to his former delusions unless *dispel magic* is cast upon him within a day. *Dispel magic* alone is useless. It is believed that the improper creation of a *map of mapping* results in the production of a *map of misleading*. These maps have no charges as such.

Map of magic

This map functions as a *map of mapping* in every way except that it can also detect magical dweomers and auras (which are highlighted on the map in pulsating red). The exact sort of dweomer is not shown on the map or made known to the map's user. The *map of magic* contains 20d4 charges; each use for mapping (which includes the detection and location of magic) drains one charge. Magical items carried on living beings can be detected and located; invisible objects can be detected as well. Area-effect spells like *mass invisibility*, certain illusions, or *stinking cloud* which are still in effect can be seen on the map as zones of red. Only areas which can be seen within 120′ indoors (or 120 yards outdoors) can be examined for such dweomers and auras, though the map will faithfully record areas much larger in size, out to the limits of a *map of mapping*.

Magic which is a permanent characteristic of a living creature (such as the magical resistance of a dragon or a wizard's ability to cast spells) cannot be detected. Magical items or areas hidden from view cannot be mapped.

Map of illusions

This map also functions as a *map of mapping*, although it can also detect any form of illusion/phantasm spell within range. A map like this contains 20d4 charges; the expenditure per usage (which includes the mapping and detection functions simultaneously) is one charge. Magical (but not psionic) invisibility can be detected by this type of map, but only one function of this map may be used at any one time, either detecting for illusions or invisibility. It is possible to *dispel invisibility* on a certain object or being by using an additional charge from this map. A saving throw vs. spells is allowed if the target is a living being and is unwilling to have its invisibility dispelled. This latter use does not erase the existing diagram on the map, but it cannot be used unless the map itself has detected the invisible target. The range of this device is 120′ indoors or underground, and 120 yards outdoors, for purposes of detecting illusions; the map will still diagram areas out to the limits of a *map of mapping*.

Map of secret doors

The functions of a *map of mapping* can also be found in a *map of secret doors*. As its name implies, this map has the ability to locate secret doors, which are shown as bright yellow dots on the map. The map contains a total of 20d4 charges. Each use to map an area and locate secret doors uses one charge. Traps of any sort cannot be detected, but concealed doors are revealed. The ranges of the detection functions of this map are 60′ indoors and 60 yards outdoors; other mapping limits are as per a *map of mapping*.

Map of navigation

This map can be used to record nearby areas on land or at sea. On land, the map shows a 20-mile radius around the user, recording only normal terrain features (forests, cities, villages, roads, trails, etc.) as per a *map of mapping*. However, this map was actually designed by Madd and Ztxar to work only on bodies of water. Somehow, the two made a mistake in the enchantment of this map, which led to the map's ability to work on land as well. The map is more potent when used from a waterborne ship. Usually, 30d4 charges are contained within.

The *map of navigation* has a 30-mile radius of effect when used from a ship. In this event, however, it will map no land features beyond a 20-mile radius. Thus, an island 22 miles away would be missed, as would features on a shoreline 27 miles away. A lake only two miles beyond the shoreline mentioned above would not appear, either.

Other information, like sea currents, ocean depths, ice floes, and so forth, may be gained from casting *legend lore* while using the *map of navigation*. The DM may add other useful or interesting navigational information as desired in this event. Additionally, ships within a 30-mile range are displayed on the map when *legend lore* is cast, and sea creatures over 20′ in length and avian creatures over 25′ long are shown as well. Each major feature appears in pictorial form with its own distinctive shape and coloration. The user automatically understands how to read the map and knows what each symbol means, though onlookers cannot see them.

Map of traps

Like the other maps, this map is similar to the *map of mapping*. The *map of traps*, however, has the ability to detect traps which are within the range of sight, 60′ indoors or 60 yards outdoors. This map

contains a total of 20d4 charges. One use to detect traps drains a charge.

Traps which have already been detected by the use of the map can be disarmed by draining one or two charges from the map. The person using the map must make a saving throw vs. death magic to disarm or deactivate a trap. The saving throw is at −2 if the trap is of a magical nature.

Nonmagical traps are permanently deactivated or disarmed using this map (crossbow traps jam, poison is neutralized, pits are covered over by a wooden lid, etc.). Magical traps like *explosive runes* can be detected, but two charges are required to deactivate them permanently. If only one charge, perhaps the last one, is available, then the magical trap is only deactivated for 2d4 turns. Only one trap of the user's choice may be deactivated per charge.

Map of distortion

This map exhibits all the properties of a *map of mapping* when examined. There is a 1% chance per level of a magic-user *identifying* the map to discover the map's true nature. The map's ill effects are not noticed by the user or any other person under its spell. Anyone looking at the map or so much as catching a glimpse of the diagram it displays must make a saving throw vs. spells or fall under the map's power. No saving throw is allowed to the user. This map has no charges as such. As with the *map of misleading*, it is thought that errors in the creation of a *map of mapping* result in a *map of distortion*.

The distances shown on the map differ from the actual distances to landmarks by 10-80% (1d8 x 10) in any direction. All those under the spell of the map see the actual distance as being the distance shown on the map, even if they previously knew the true distances to the mapped landmarks. The user and all others who are affected perceive no inconsistencies between what the map shows and what the world shows them; if the user walks eight miles to get to a hill that the map shows as being four miles away, the user believes he has walked four miles. The effects from a single use of this map last for two days, at which time the map erases itself (unless it has already been erased). Erasing the map before two days are up has no effect on the duration of the user's or onlooker's confusion. However, if the user activates this map more than once, he must make a saving throw vs. death magic (as is normally done upon each use of one of these maps) or else be *feebleminded* as per the sixth-level druid spell. No onlookers are affected in any way by this second activation.

If the person using this map has activated it only once, that person (and all others affected by the map) suffer other visual distortions as well during the two days that the map's effects occur, even if the mapped area is left behind. If attacking, those affected by this map roll to hit at −4 and can be hit at +4. The players should not know of this adjustment.

To get rid of the ill effects, each person must be cured individually. A *remove curse* followed by a *dispel magic* spell, both being cast on only one person at a time, must be employed. Anyone under a *feeblemind* can be cured by a *heal* or *wish* spell. Throwing these spells on the map itself has no effect whatsoever. Only after all these steps are taken will the map lose its control over the minds of those affected. Destroying the map is of utmost importance, as failing to do so causes anyone who was once *feebleminded* by the map to become *feebleminded* again within 2-8 days. If the map is destroyed, all of its victims are cured of whatever afflictions the map gave them.

Madd's symbol

Madd's marvelous maps

Madd's marvelous maps are combinations of some of the maps listed above. Except for the *map of mapping and magic* the other maps listed below are all the creation of Dane, Madd's disciple. Madd actually created only one prototype of a *marvelous map*, which has since been destroyed. After Dane mastered the technique of creating magical maps, he duplicated the original before its destruction, and created even more versions by combining the functions of several maps.

It is worth noting that, during the creation of these maps, an unfortunate flaw is sometimes produced because of the instability of the magic involved. Upon expiration of a *marvelous map*'s charges, the map might explode, causing magical damage as listed in each map's description. This inherent flaw was not detected by the creators, although it may be detected by any magic-user employing an *identify* spell on the map (which allows a 10% chance per level of noting the map's flaw). Not all of the maps created have this particular magical flaw.

Map of mapping and magic

This map initially functions in all ways as a *map of magic*. After 20d4 charges have been used, however, the map has an 85% chance of becoming a *map of mapping* (with 10d4 charges) and a 15% chance of exploding in magical flame, causing everyone within 10′ of the explosion to take 2d4 + 2 hp damage (save vs. spells for half damage).

Map of mapping and illusions

This map functions at first as a *map of illusions*. After 20d4 charges have been used, the map has an 80% chance to change into a *map of mapping* (with 10d4 charges) and a 20% chance that it explodes, causing 2d8 + 2 hp damage to everyone within a 10′ radius of the blast (save vs. spells for half damage).

Table 1
Magical Maps of Greyhawk Determination Table

1d20	Map type
1-6	*Map of mapping*
7-8	*Map of misleading*
9-11	*Map of magic*
12-13	*Map of illusions*
14-15	*Map of secret doors*
16	*Map of navigation*
17-18	*Map of traps*
19	*Map of distortion*
20	*Madd's marvelous map* (see Table 2)

Table 2
***Madd's Marvelous Map* Determination Table**

1d20	Map type
1-3	*Map of mapping and magic*
4-6	*Map of mapping and illusions*
7-9	*Map of mapping and secret doors*
10-13	*Map of mapping and traps*
14	*Map of magic and illusions*
15	*Map of magic and secret doors*
16	*Map of magic and traps*
17	*Map of illusions and secrèt doors*
18	*Map of illusions and traps*
19	*Map of secret doors and traps*
20	*Dane's version*

Map of mapping and secret doors

This map works like a *map of secret doors* with 20d4 charges. When the charges are gone, there is an 85% chance that the map becomes a *map of mapping* (10d4 charges) and a 15% chance that the map explodes, inflicting 2d4 + 2 hp damage to each person within a 10′ radius (save vs. spells for half damage).

Map of mapping and traps

At first, this map functions as a *map of traps* with 20d4 charges. With the expiration of the charges, this map has a 70% chance of becoming a *map of mapping* (10d4 charges) and a 30% chance of being destroyed, inflicting 2d4 + 8 hp damage to every person within a 10′ radius (save vs. spells for half damage).

Map of magic and illusions

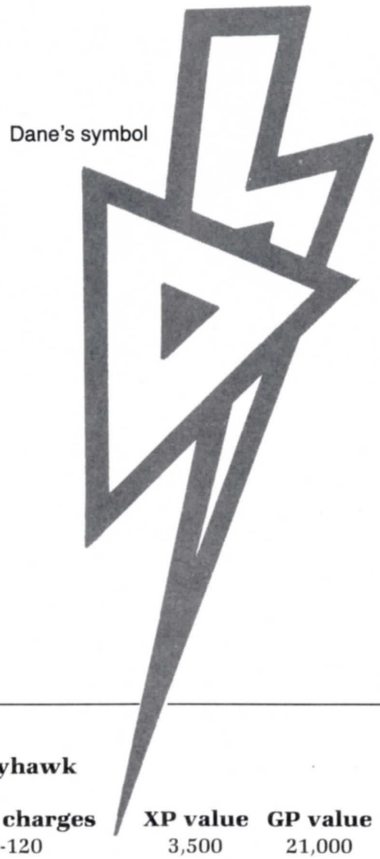
This map functions as a combination of the two types of maps mentioned in its name. Contained within the map are 10d4 + 10 charges. Each charge can be used to detect either magic, illusions, or invisible objects, with all of the range penalties and abilities noted for the two map types of which this map is composed. Additionally, charges may be used to render invisible objects visible as per the *map of illusions*. The map explodes when all of the charges are used up, causing 1d10 + 10 hp damage per person in a 10′ radius. A save vs. spells applies for half damage; however, the user gains no save and always takes maximum damage, unlike with other sorts of exploding maps.

Map of magic and secret doors

This map has all of the same functions as those mentioned in the *map of magic* and the *map of secret doors*. A single charge may be used to either detect magic or secret doors, but not both at once. Like the *map of magic and illusions*, this map has 10d4 + 10 charges. Upon expiration of these charges, the map explodes, causing 1d12 + 8 hp damage to every person within a 10′ radius. A saving throw vs. spells is allowed, though the user gains no save and always takes maximum damage.

Map of magic and traps

This map is also similar in description to the *map of magic* — the added advantage being all of the abilities listed in the *map of traps*. This map also has 10d4 + 10 charges, each of which may be used to detect either magic or traps, or to negate any traps so detected. When these charges are expended, the map explodes, causing 2d4 + 4 hp damage to all within 15′. A saving throw vs. spells is applicable for half damage, though the user takes maximum damage with no saving throw.



Map of illusions and secret doors

This map functions as a combination of a *map of illusions* and a *map of secret doors*, with a single charge either detecting illusions, invisibility, or secret doors, or dispelling the invisibility on an object or being. This particular map has 10d4 + 10 charges. When all the charges have been expended, this map explodes, causing 1d12 + 10 hp damage to each person within a 10′ radius (save vs. spells for half damage, except for the user who takes full damage with no saving throw).

Map of illusions and traps

This map has 10d4 + 10 charges and functions as both of the map types noted in its name. A single charge will either detect illusions, traps, or invisible objects, and charges can be used to dispel invisibility on objects or persons. When all charges have been used, the map explodes, doing 2d6 + 4 hp damage to all within 15′, with a saving throw vs. spells for half damage. The user, of course, gains no saving throw and always takes maximum damage.

Map of secret doors and traps

This map works as both a *map of secret doors* and a *map of traps* and has 10d4 + 10 charges. One charge may be used to detect either secret doors or traps, or charges may be used to disarm traps as per the *map of traps*. When all charges have been used, the resulting explosion does 3d4 + 4 hp damage to all within 10′, with a saving throw for half damage. The user takes maximum damage and gains no save against it.

Dane's version

This map was created by Dane through the use of the various techniques taught to him by Madd. This map has 20d6 charges. For the most part, this map works as a *map of magic and illusions*, as noted above. Additionally, *Dane's version* has the ability to cast one *permanent illusion* or one *programmed illusion* per day, and one *veil* per week, as a 16th-level illusionist. Each spell drains one charge from the map. The illusions last until dispelled or until the time limit expires, as given for the spells. Any attempts to disbelieve illusions created by this map are made at −2. This map is one of the rarest, as the services of an extremely powerful illusionist are required by the magic-user creating it (Dane was lucky enough to be both himself). When all charges have been used, the map bursts into flame as per a *fireball* from a 12th-level magic-user. Saving throws vs. spells are allowed for all within 20′ for half damage, except for the user, who takes maximum damage without a saving throw. All items carried by the user take a −6 on their saving throws vs. *fireball* if this occurs. Ω

Table 3
Value Tables for the Magical Maps of Greyhawk

Map	Initial charges	XP value	GP value
Map of mapping	30-120	3,500	21,000
Map of misleading	—	—	500
Map of magic	20-80	5,000	30,000
Map of illusions	20-80	6,000	36,000
Map of secret doors	20-80	5,500	33,000
Map of navigation	30-120	5,000	30,000
Map of traps	20-80	5,500	33,000
Map of distortion	—	—	500
Map of mapping and magic	20-80/10-40	6,000	36,000
Map of mapping and illusions	20-80/10-40	6,500	39,000
Map of mapping and secret doors	20-80/10-40	6,250	37,500
Map of mapping and traps	20-80/10-40	6,250	37,500
Map of magic and illusions	20-50	7,500	45,000
Map of magic and secret doors	20-50	8,000	48,000
Map of magic and traps	20-50	8,000	48,000
Map of illusions and secret doors	20-50	8,750	52,500
Map of illusions and traps	20-50	8,750	52,500
Map of secret doors and traps	20-50	8,250	49,500
Dane's version	20-120	9,500	57,000

Plane Speaking

The (Positive) Quasi-Elementals!

by Jeff Grubb

The elemental planes have their own native lifeforms, like any other plane of existence. In addition to the creatures that live in the environments of those planes (such as xorn, wind walkers, marids, and azer), there are living embodiments of the planes themselves. These "true elementals" are the creatures that are summoned and enslaved by magic-user and druid spells to serve mankind. The earth elemental is no mere duplicate of an earthly beast nor a native of the Plane of Earth, but a part of that plane, gifted with intelligence and able to roam wild over the planar terrain unless brought into service by spells.

I mention this to separate the creatures who live *in* the elemental planes from creatures *of* the elemental planes. The xorn lives *in* the Plane of Earth; the earth elemental is a part of that plane. This explains the apparent difference in abilities of these creatures when encountered in the Prime Material plane. The earth elemental of the *Monster Manual* lacks the xorn's molecular adjustment ability, for example.

Some of the creatures of the elemental planes are explained elsewhere. The elementals themselves are detailed in the *Monster Manual*, while all of the para-elementals are covered in *Monster Manual II*. The quasi-elemental planes, however, have a single representative noted — the lightning quasi-elemental. The other seven quasi-elementals will be covered here in two parts. This first part will discuss beings of the other three quasi-elemental planes which exist on the border between the elemental planes and the Positive Material plane — steam, radiance, and minerals. A second article will cover creatures of quasi-elemental planes that border the Negative Material plane — dust, ash, vacuum, and salt.

These creatures are the "pure" elemental forces of their planes. Creatures as detailed in *Manual of the Planes* do live there, with the special abilities as noted in Appendix II. These, though, are the living embodiments of those planes.

Quasi-elementals may be rarely found in the Prime Material plane, but they appear with common frequency in the inner planes, particularly in their native quasi-elemental planes and in the elemental planes adjacent to their home planes. It has been surmised that these creatures have the ability to withstand the effects of the Positive and Negative Material plane, though this is unproven. Each quasi-elemental may be of small, medium, or large size. The size of a quasi-elemental depends on where it is found:

1d100	Prime Material plane	Inner plane
01-60	Small	Large
61-90	Medium	Medium
91-00	Large	Small

Lightning quasi-elementals have been covered in *Monster Manual II* (page 103). In the Plane of Lightning, these creatures are common and appear in numbers of 1-6. Also, several of the more powerful mages have found a use for these creatures as the power source for their exotic artifacts.

[*The rings of quasi-elemental command from DRAGON® issue #120, pages 33-34, would be especially useful with these creatures.*]

RADIANCE QUASI-ELEMENTAL

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
NO. APPEARING: *1 (1-6)*
ARMOR CLASS: *0*
MOVE: *48″*
HIT DICE: *6, 9, or 12*
% IN LAIR: *Nil*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *1*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *1-3 + 1 hp/HD*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*
INTELLIGENCE: *Low*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral (chaotic)*
SIZE: *S*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
LEVEL/XP VALUE: *VII/1,000 + 15 per hp*

Radiance quasi-elementals look like rapidly turning spheres of multicolored light. They are rarely found on the Prime Material plane, and then only in the area of spectacular events such as double-arched rainbows or multihued meteor showers in the night sky.

Radiance quasi-elementals normally attack with beams of pure light, each of which has a different effect. The range of these beams is equal to the hit dice of the creature (i.e., 6″, 9″, or 12″ range). The beams have the following effects:

1. *Red beam:* 1d6 + 1 hp/HD (cold) damage;
2. *Orange beam:* 1d6 + 1 hp/HD (heat) damage;
3. *Yellow beam:* 1d6 + 1 hp/HD (acid) damage;
4. *Green beam:* 1d6 + 1 hp/HD (poison) damage;
5. *Blue beam:* 1d6 + 1 hp/HD (electrical) damage;
6. *Indigo beam:* 1d6 + 1 hp/HD (holy water) damage; and,
7. *Violet beam:* 1d6 + 1 hp/HD (force) damage.

Effects are as for that particular type of damage, but the energy is a ray 1′ wide. For instance, the *yellow beam* leaves no acid behind, but the effects are as if a bolt of acid struck the target. Devices which offer protection from that particular type of damage negate the effects of the quasi-elemental. Similarly, if the creature is immune to the effects of the type of attack, the creature will not be harmed (for example, a paladin struck by the *indi-*

go beam of holy water effect would not be harmed, but a wraith would).

Radiance quasi-elementals radiate a *continual light* spell at all times. This is diminished when they reduce their spin so that they resemble will-o-the-wisps, or intensified by increasing their spin rates. In the latter case, all who look at a rapidly spinning quasi-elemental must make a saving throw vs. death or be blinded for 2-20 days. The range of this intense radiation is 12″ in all directions.

Spells which create or control darkness can prevent such a quasi-elemental from using its blinding attack, and these spells inflict damage of 1 hp per level of the caster to the creature. Fire, cold, and electricity inflict half damage. Weapons must be enchanted to +1 or better to inflict damage on a radiance quasi-elemental.

Powerful mages have been known to capture radiance quasi-elementals and use them as both light sources and guards in their domains. The creatures have low intelligence but can separate friend from foe, so that a group of invading mercenaries may find the the mage's own lamps attacking them.

STEAM QUASI-ELEMENTAL

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
NO. APPEARING: *1 (1-6)*
ARMOR CLASS: *2*
MOVE: *12″*
HIT DICE: *6, 9, or 12*
% IN LAIR: *Nil*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *1*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *1-6 + 1 hp/HD*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*
INTELLIGENCE: *Low*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral (chaotic)*
SIZE: *L*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
LEVEL/XP VALUE: *VII/1,000 + 15 per hp*

Steam quasi-elementals are very rare in the Prime Material plane and are only found in areas of highly agitated water, such as the base of waterfalls, in geyser pools, and in areas where the ocean surf strikes rocks. Steam quasi-elementals look much like transparent, ghostlike water elementals.

True steam quasi-elementals (as opposed to the other lifeforms found on that quasi-elemental plane) can control their internal temperature, changing their substance from freezing cold fogs to scalding steam. Their method of attack involves engulfing their victims, enclosing a cubic area of up to 60′ on a side. They then inflict 1d6 + 1 hp/HD damage to each creature within either a hot or cold cloud. Steam quasi-elementals are intelligent enough to recognize if one mode of attack is not working and switch to the other. A device which protects the user from the effects of heat or cold (such as a *ring of warmth*) also protects the user from that particular cloud attack form.

Steam quasi-elementals can fly or move beneath water at normal movement rates, as well as seep through cracks into small areas. They cannot be harmed by spells which affect weather, temperature, cold, or water. They take half damage from fire and full damage from electricity. In the latter case, however, every other living being beneath the steam quasi-elemental's cloud must make a saving throw versus the effect, suffering half damage if failing and no damage if successful. Steam quasi-elementals can only be harmed by +1 or better enchanted weapons.

Steam quasi-elementals tend to be the most chaotic of the positive quasi-elementals — so much so that even those mages who have divined methods of summoning and containing them have yet to find an adequate, safe use for them.

MINERAL QUASI-ELEMENTAL

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
NO. APPEARING: *1-3 (1-8)*
ARMOR CLASS: *0*
MOVE: *6″*
HIT DICE: *6, 9, or 12*
% IN LAIR: *Nil*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *1*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *1-8 + 1 hp/HD*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*
INTELLIGENCE: *Low*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral (chaotic)*
SIZE: *L*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
LEVEL/XP VALUE: *VII/1,000 + 15 per hp*

Mineral quasi-elementals are normally only encountered deep beneath the earth, in veins of gold-bearing quartz and other untouched riches. Numerous dwarven nations have encountered these creatures in the wild, and the dwarves pay a healthy respect to their territorial claims. In the Plane of Minerals, mineral quasi-elementals are more common, which further increases the peril of that realm.

Mineral quasi-elementals appear in a variety of forms, always resembling some crystalline parody of Prime Material plane life. Gemlike paladins sit astride glittering mounts with lacey wings of mica next to huge beasts that look like carved, animated dragons with gemlike eyes. This mimicry is inexact and unexplained, as the creatures do not behave like the beings they mimic.

Mineral quasi-elementals have the ability to move through stone as do xorn. In addition, they have the ability to regenerate 2 hp damage per round as long as they are alive and in contact with solid, unliving matter (stone, earth, etc). Their most dangerous ability is to *merge* with other quasi-elementals of their type. Two mineral quasi-elementals may *merge* to form a single, larger quasi-elemental of double the hit dice. The *merged* creature can attack twice per round; each attack inflicts 2d8 hp damage, plus 1 hp damage per combined hit die. In addition, the *merged* quasi-elemental regenerates 4 hp damage per round. Multiple *merges* may occur; the only limit seems to be the number of quasi-elementals in the area. A reasonable maximum limit of 100 HD would be the greatest *merged* being ever encountered.

Mineral quasi-elementals are affected by heat, cold, fire, and water. They cannot be affected by attacks which affect solid objects, nor can they be petrified or paralyzed. They take double damage from acid attacks. Lightning inflicts normal damage but forces a *merged* mineral quasi-elemental to make a saving throw against spells or break down immediately into its component parts (damage inflicted on the *merged* creature is distributed equally among its parts).

Despite their glowing appearance, the bodies of mineral quasi-elementals have few gems or other valuable stones. However, their forms contain a rich variety of minerals that would be useful to sages and mages, so that a defeated mineral quasi-elemental could fetch a price of up to 200 gp per HD from a buyer. Ω

LOOKING FOR A GAME CONVENTION?

If your gaming group is too small or if you've just moved into the neighborhood, finding friends who are also gamers can be a problem. However, your local hobbies and games shop may have a bulletin board where gamers can advertise their groups and meeting times. The hobby store may also know of local game conventions where you can meet dozens of other gamers with the same interests. The Convention Calendar in this issue may also be of help. Don't sit at home and wish you knew more gamers. Go out and find them today.

The Game Wizards

A book of kender, knights & Krynn

by Mike Breault

Hi. I've been given this month's Game Lizards column to tell you all about the latest addition to the multizillion-selling DRAGONLANCE® saga: *DRAGONLANCE Adventures*, by Tracy Hickman and Margaret Weis, appearing in bookstores and hobby shops in early October. This 128-page, hardback source book is coming out in response to the tremendous interest shown in getting all the background for the DRAGONLANCE game world in one book. But there's a lot more to this book than just background material.

DRAGONLANCE Adventures gives you all the information you need to run your own adventures in Krynn. Whether you create characters here or bring in existing characters from other campaigns, the world is yours to explore. This product is designed to encourage players to create their own characters to adventure in Krynn, either during the War of the Lance, after that conflict, or in the distant past before the Cataclysm tore the land of Ansalon asunder.

In addition to all the standard AD&D® game character classes and races, several classes and races unique to Krynn are introduced. Players can now choose to run Knights of Solamnia, kender, gnomes (the technicians of Krynn), or Wizards of High Sorcery. Each of these additions contains full details on its history, philosophy, character options and abilities, level advancement tables, spells, and more.

Knights and gnomes

The sections on the Knights of Solamnia describe the workings of the three orders of Knights, rules for convening Knightly Councils, and the ways to become a Knight of any of the orders. Also included are information and tables on the clandestine groups of Knights (the Circles) that operate deep within the lands of the Dragon Highlords, preparing the way for the overthrow of those evil oppressors. Everything you need to run a Knight of Solamnia PC is here.

The redundant wackiness of Krynn's gnomes is revealed in its full glory. You can now build incredibly intricate and unwieldy monstrosities to accomplish the simplest of tasks! As if this wasn't enough incentive to create a gnome PC, rules are also given for creating devices that might actually prove to be useful. Along with the usual stuff you need to know for a new player-character race, you also get information about how to create a gnomish device, how likely the device is to do what you want, and the unexpected (and sometimes unpleasant) secondary functions that your device might have. There are tables showing you how to figure out the Complexity Level of your device, the parts you need to get it to work, and how much time and money are needed to build the contraption. Then, when you're all done, you might need to refer to the Gnome Mishap table if your invention goes awry.

Also included is the Gnome Design Hall of Fame, a compilation of the greatest devices in gnomish history — not that they all *worked*, mind you; it's just that all gnomes agreed that they were wonderful ideas. Complete game descriptions are given for such wonders of gnomish technology as the flapestry (a flying art exhibit), the fargab (a device to communicate over long distances), the gnomethinkklackeradd (an overly large mechanical calculator), and other devices that will amaze and bewilder you.

The Orders of High Sorcery

Magic-users in the world of Krynn must join one of the three Orders of High Sorcery. Those who refuse to join are called *renegades* and are hunted down by their card-carrying counterparts. There is an Order of High Sorcery for each of the three major moral alignments: good, evil, and neutral (the orders of the White Robes, Black Robes, and Red Robes, respectively). Each order has its own organization, rules, level advancement system, and spells. Some of the AD&D game Second Edition changes for magic-users make their first appearances here in the *DRAGONLANCE Adventures* hardback.

The influences of Krynn's three moons — Solinari, Lunitari, and Nuitari — on the powers of wizards are detailed in this section as well. Each of the Moons of Magic primarily affects the powers of one of the three orders of magic, but the times when two or three of the moons are in conjunction are periods of special powers and perils for the magic-users of Krynn.

Also in this section is a full-page chart that DMs can use to keep track of the relative positions of the moons in their orbits around Krynn. Thus, the DM can tell at a glance the waxings and wanings of the powers of wizards according to the phases of their moons. This chart also enables the DM to keep track of the conjunctions of the moons.

The Towers of High Sorcery are described in detail here, as is the Test of High Sorcery that must be undertaken by all who join one of the Orders of High Sorcery. Guidelines are given for those DMs who wish to give Tests to the mages in their DRAGONLANCE saga campaigns.

New gods, new alignments

In this book, the gods of Krynn are described more completely than ever before. The philosophies and structures of the three pantheons (good, evil, and neutral) of gods are given here, as are detailed sections on each god of Krynn. Each deity's description contains a history of the god, his game statistics, his godly Sphere of Influence (which determines the spells available to his followers), the special powers he grants to his followers, and additional spells his followers gain over and above their daily allotments.

Good, evil, and neutral clerics each have their own level advancement system, their own hierarchies, and their own tables for gaining spells by level. Within each moral alignment, the spells available to a cleric depend greatly on which god the cleric worships.

In *DRAGONLANCE Adventures*, a new alignment system is presented (similar to the new system coming in the AD&D game revision). This system grants the player characters much more freedom of action than the old system; no longer does a character's alignment force him into certain actions or modes of thought. Now, a character's actions determine his alignment. If a character acts against his present alignment's philosophies too often, he slides into an alignment that is better suited to his actions. (Think about it. If you see Joe beating up on small, defenseless animals, you wouldn't say: "Gee, Joe's of good alignment — but why is he beating up those small, defenseless animals?" You would say, "Gee, Joe's beating up those small, defenseless animals. He must be an evil person." That's the way it should really

DAILY PLANET™
GAMING SUPPLEMENT

Special Summer Edition | *September 4th, 1987* | *Number 2*

MAYFAIR GAMES CREATES THE *GAMEMASTER CONNECTION.*

Mayfair Games announced today the creation of the *Gamemaster Connection* for DC™ HEROES RPG Gamemasters. The *GC* will supply Gamemasters around the country with *DC HEROES RPG Newsletters*, new posters, and information about what's new in the DC HEROES RPG.

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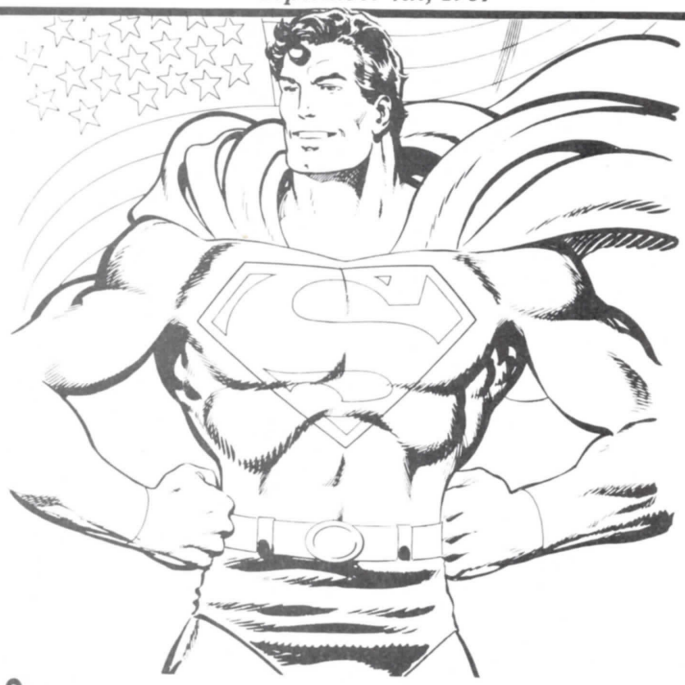
The first 48 years of the Man of Steel™ is featured in Mayfair's 96 page **Superman Sourcebook**. It includes the history and the statistics of the pre-Crisis™ Superman as well as those of Lex Luthor™, Lois Lane™, Brainiac™, Jimmy Olsen™, and others.

The floorplans for the original Fortress of Solitude™ and the Daily Planet™, are included and the book has a brand new cover by Superman author-artist John Byrne. Pick it up at your local hobby or comic shop.

NOTE: We're not releasing the post-Crisis™ **Superman Sourcebook II** until early next year, but we're going to give you a special preview of the new Superman's stats at right.



Superman

SUPERMAN *alias Clark Kent™*

DEX:	23	STR:	35	BODY:	24
INT:	12	WILL:	22	MIND:	15
INFL:	10	AURA:	10	SPIRIT:	4
INIT:	45			HERO POINTS:	210

POWERS:
Directional Hearing: 8, Extended Hearing: 8, Flight: 15, Heat Vision™: 19, Invulnerability: 22, Microscopic Vision: 15, Recall: 19, Sealed Systems: 11, Super Breath™: 16, Super Hearing™: 8, Superspeed™: 14, Systemic Antidote: 20, Telekinesis: 22, Telescopic Vision™: 13, Thermal Vision: 13, X-Ray Vision™: 13

SKILLS:
Artist/Writer: 5, Charisma/Persuasion: 20, Scholar: 10, Thief: 4

LIMITATIONS:

- Superman obtains his Powers and his enhanced Physical Attributes through exposure to a yellow sun. He has a 240-point solar reserve when he is away from a sun, and until he is re-exposed to solar radiation, he loses 5 points per hour from this reserve. He can only lift 19 APs in weight. In addition, each use of a Power or Physical Attribute per phase reduces the reserve by the number of APs that he uses. (He may choose to use less than all of the APs he has in a Power or Attribute.) Superman may use no more than 10% of his remaining reserve to power any single Attribute, Skill, or Power during one phase. When his reserve falls to 40 points or below, he may use 4 APs for any Attribute, Power, or Skill until the reserve is depleted. While using his solar reserve, Superman cannot push Powers and Attributes. He can, however, spend Hero Points for Desperation Recovery or to increase his AV, EV, OV, or RV. Deduct Hero Points spent in this manner from the solar reserve.
- STR or Telekinesis cannot be Pushed.
- Telekinesis has a range of Touch, and only works when Superman is flying.
- X-Ray Vision can't penetrate lead.

VULNERABILITIES:
(All of Superman's loss Vulnerabilities and reductions affect his Attributes, Powers and Skills)

Rare Fatal and Loss:
Green Kryptonite™: Range: 3

Magic Miscellaneous:
all Powers, Skills, and attributes against magic (Mystical Powers or objects) are at 4.

CONNECTIONS:
Metropolis™ (high-level)
Metropolis Prison™ (high-level)
White House (high-level)

MOTIVATION:
Upholding the Good

WEALTH:
Affluent

JOB:
Newspaper Reporter/Novelist

RACE:
Normal Humanoid

PSYCHOLOGY

The *Crisis on Infinite Earths™* did not alter Superman's basic attitudes. His adopted parents here on Earth have raised their son to value "Truth, Justice, and the American Way™." He still fights the good fight against villainy wherever it rears its ugly head, and he is always there to help in times of trouble. He still Upholds the Good.

However, the post-Crisis Superman differs in subtle ways from his former self. Although he is still Earth's most powerful hero, he is more vulnerable than before. He does not view himself as primarily a citizen of Earth, but as a true American champion.

Superman holds life in high regard. He would do anything in his power to rescue an innocent life, including putting his own life in jeopardy or allowing a villain to escape. But there are times when his anger gets the best of him, such as when he thought Luthor had kidnapped his parents; at that time it seemed that he was willing to take a human life. Any such lapses only occur when there seems to be no other possible solution. It should be noted that these occasions are, fortunately, few and far between.

As Clark was growing up, he had no memory of his Kryptonian™ heritage and no idea where he came from. When he recently learned of Krypton's™ history and culture, he found it ultimately meaningless. Superman is now, first and foremost, a human being of Earth. His otherworldy origin is something he'll treasure forever, but something which is only a curiosity. It is his rearing on Earth that matters.

METHODS

Due to the fact that the Man of Steel has fought relatively few powered opponents, his methods are characterized by a relaxed confidence. He will let gunmen shoot at him before disarming them, rather than whisking them off to jail immediately. He rarely tries to get a tactical advantage over a foe. This has gotten him into hot water in more than one situation.

DC HEROES RPG won both the Gamer's Choice and the H.G. Wells Awards in 1986 for best new role-playing game rules. For more information, write to:

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Niles, IL
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work, and this is what the new alignment system will do.) We have included a simple chart to make it easy for the DM to keep track of characters' alignments and how their actions affect their alignments.

Off to the races

Next come discussions of the unique races of the DRAGONLANCE saga. The history of Krynn's races is discussed in detail, including the role of the Greystone of Gargath in transforming Krynn's few original races into the myriad creatures of present-day Ansalon. Each race is addressed in its own section. The special characteristics and foibles of elves, tinker gnomes, the various dwarven races, and kender are described along with their game statistics. Also included here is a section on special proficiencies designed especially for characters in the world of the DRAGONLANCE saga. Following this are descriptions and game statistics for the creatures that are native only to the world of Krynn: draconians, fetch, gully dwarves, shadowpeople, dreamwraiths, spectral minions, and thanoi.

The history of Krynn

The explanation of how the world came to be is covered in this book as well. The Timeline of Krynn covers the major events in the world's past, from its creation through the War of the Lance. The history of the War of the Lance is given in great detail, with all the battles and political machinations of that world-shaping conflict. Pre-Cataclysmic maps of the political boundaries and climate of Ansalon are given here in case players wish to adventure in the early days of Krynn.

Against the backdrop of the history of Krynn, the major personalities who dominated that history are presented with game statistics and personal backgrounds. The most important NPCs of the past, present, and future of Krynn are described here, along with the player characters of the War of the Lance.

Lavish descriptions of post-war Krynn are given so players can experience further adventures in the turmoil of the war-torn continent of Ansalon. Post-war maps of the politics and climate of Ansalon are included in this section.

No source book on Krynn would be complete without discussing the many unique magical items that the world of the DRAGONLANCE saga has brought to the AD&D game. The *dragonlance*, the *orbs of dragonkind*, the *frostreavers*, the *glasses of Arcanist*, and many more arcane devices are detailed in this book.

This is just a brief listing of the Krynnish lore and game information available in *DRAGONLANCE Adventures*. For all those gamers who wrote us saying that they wanted info on how to take their own characters adventuring in Krynn (or to take the characters of the DRAGONLANCE saga on further adventures), this book's for you! Ω

(continued from page 3)

I still loved Joe's stories years later, because we had both shared so deeply in the wonder of the moment, the excitement and the thrill of it all. I'm aware that now tales of flying saucers in secret hangars qualify as modern mythology, and the thrill found in UFO stories has faded for me over the years to the point where I look at them with unabashed skepticism, but UFOs were once special things to a kid. They were to me, anyway, though they seem to be out of fashion these days.

The Pope Lick Monster lived in the woods by the old railroad trestle that crossed over Pope Lick and ran parallel to Taylorsville Road, heading east out of Jeffersontown, Kentucky. Lots of stories circulated through my high school when I was in 7th grade about the depredations of the monster, which included jumping down from the trestle onto the roofs of cars that drove beneath it on a twisting highway that intersected Taylorsville Road.

The Pope Lick Monster wasn't a harmless prankster, though. One teenager drove beneath the trestle in an open-top convertible. His body was found the next day, slumped over the steering wheel of his wrecked car. His neck was broken. I knew any number of students who had heard the story and swore it was the truth.

"He's a crazy man," said Paul. Paul wasn't the most pleasant kid to know in 7th grade, but he seemed to know a lot, even if he wanted to beat me up once. "He killed his wife and kids and lives in the woods now, all wild and hairy. You can't kill 'im."

Later, one of my cousins was riding around with a carload of girlfriends when they drove under the trestle toward the main highway. All of them were acutely aware of the legend of the monster. My devilish cousin reached out of an open window and rapped hard on the roof of the car as they went under the trestle. Everyone screamed and the driver nearly drove into a ditch, flooring the accelerator to 70 MPH.

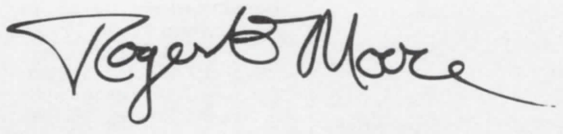
I had occasion to drive past the Pope Lick trestle in later years and can attest to the eerie atmosphere of the area, out in the hilly country along a particularly lonely stretch of highway. The trestle itself seems to grow out of the earth like an old living thing from the past. I could easily believe that a monster lived there, even if I knew that one didn't. I sometimes wonder if anyone believes in that monster anymore.

The booklet arrived in the mail along with a dozen other things: manuscripts, game rules questions, letters to the editor, sample copies of new games, and all the other things that show up in a game magazine's mailbox. I sorted out the mail and noted the envelope with no return address. I thumbed it open and found the booklet.

It was called "Dark Dungeons" and told how playing role-playing games initiated people into secret cults which taught mind control and un-Christian behavior. Neither was true, though I regretted the absence of mind-control powers; they would have come in handy the next time I asked for a raise. Whoever wrote that booklet had some pretty bizarre ideas about role-playing games in general. Lots of drama and darkest paranoia, but no truth.

I wondered how anyone could believe that role-playing games gave you mind-control powers or inducted you into secret cults or did anything else to you. Then, of course, I remembered the hammer and sickle, the UFO in the hangar, the Pope Lick Monster, the Proctor & Gamble moon-and-stars logo, the missing thirteenth floor in certain skyscrapers, and all the other irrational beliefs of our modern age." Dark Dungeons" had simply joined their ranks. It needed no reason to exist; it just *was*. And someday it, too, would fade away, as all myths do.

I sighed and threw the booklet out. I'm getting too old for myths.



A Second Look at Zebulon's Guide

Corrections, clarifications, additions, and answers

by Kim Eastland

Some time ago, I had the pleasure of designing *Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space*, Volume 1, the first addition to the STAR FRONTIERS® game rules in many years. For those STAR FRONTIERS game fans who have picked it up, here are a few comments and corrections for that tome.

Preface: The preface mentions "Bizarre" in its first full paragraph. This is the second largest continent on the planet Faire in the Capella system out in the Rim. Its largest city is Minzii.

Contents Page: Under the Tables listing, the Skill Costs Table is actually on page 9, not 10. The Equipment Tables are actually on pages 88, 89, and 90.

Page 1: The first sentence of the Humma's special ability to spring charge should read, "A Humma can spring up to 25 meters horizontally from a standing start and, if it lands within two meters of an opponent, come to a dead stop and make a free melee attack against the opponent. This attack is in addition to normal actions or attacks that turn."

Page 3: The Mechanon pictured is a propaganda illustration issued by the planet Mechano itself to better the Frontier's image of Mechanons. In reality, Mechanons come in a variety of different shapes and sizes, and they are much deadlier looking than this cartoon version.

Page 5: Delete the Dexterity Modifier column on the Ability Score Table. It has been replaced by the Dexterity Modifiers Table on page 38. On the Racial Ability Modifier Table, the PER/LDR modifiers for Osakar and Humma are "−10."

Page 6: The last sentence in the last paragraph on this page should begin "A positive shift makes. . ." Delete the previous "It does make."

Page 7: The Techex profession skill listed as "Machinery: Operate" is actually "Machinery Operation."

Page 9: The second paragraph of the last column states that skipping levels is not allowed, even if the character has enough experience to do so. This means that though a character has enough experience points (XP) to directly jump from second to fourth level in a skill, he must spend at least one adventure (of a substantial nature) with the skill at third level before he can spend the rest of his XP to achieve fourth level.

Page 11: With regards to the Medical section, note that when a character has a disease, infection, infestation, poison, or radiation introduced into his system, damage does not begin to occur until the turn following the introduction. All other forms of damage (weapons damage, fire, falling, etc.) occur instantly, in the same turn they are introduced to the character. In the Robotics section, note that roboprogs are not interchangeable with maxiprogs or bodycomp progits.

Page 12: The second to the last sentence in the Weapons paragraph should end ". . . and his result area can never be greater than the Blue area unless he rolls a 01-02 (see Automatic Rolls on page 29)."

Page 13: The skill check for Camouflage is secretly rolled by the referee. This is because the character will not know if he is successful until someone else spots or misses the camouflaged structure or item.

Page 18: The fourth sentence of the Hypnosis skill should read "(If the hypnotist is a Sathar, his skill level is eighth, but an unwilling victim is allowed a Logic check in addition to the normal Intuition check.)" This change applies as it is now widely known that Sathar can hypnotize. Also, the prerequisite skill for the Machinery Repair skills is Machinery Operation.

Page 19: The first sentence of the first paragraph should read: "Techexes who operate these devices for a living must have Matter Transferal Devices skill level 9." The skills Medical Treatment: Disease, Medical Treatment: Infection, and Medical Treatment: Infestation all have identical second and third paragraphs. The words "98-00 or" should be deleted from the beginning of the second paragraph in each, and the words "01-02 or" should be deleted from the beginning of the third paragraph in each.

Page 20: The skills Medical Treatment: Poison and Medical Treatment: Radiation both have identical second and third paragraphs. The words "98-00 or" should be deleted from the beginning of the second paragraph in each, and the words "01-02 or" should be deleted from the beginning of the third paragraph.

Page 21: The fourth sentence of the Medical Treatment: Wounds II skill should read: "For every 10 points of damage (or fraction of 10 points) that are healed, a full turn of treatment time and an additional dose of biocort are required."

Page 22: The Pumping Federanium's fifth sentence should end: ". . . may have trouble fitting into suits and equipment normally designed for his race."

Page 23: In the Robotics: Robopsychologist section, note that any robopsychologist who attempts to alter the functions or mission of a Mechanon suffers a −8 CS modifier.

Page 24: With regards to the Stealth skill, note that the skill check for a character using Stealth to sneak up on someone must be made every 30 meters if the user is moving slowly or 15 meters if the user is moving quickly. The skill check for using Stealth to "tail" a suspect must be made every 30 minutes of stalking.

Page 29: The beginning of Step 2 of the Ranged Weapon Combat Procedure should

read: "Apply all appropriate combat modifiers, Dexterity modifiers, and shift columns to the left and/or right." The first sentence of Step 3 should read: "Roll percentile dice and locate the final result on the Resolution Table."

Page 31: The second sentence at the top of column one should read: "Opportunity shots are like Careful Aim shots; the character can do nothing else that turn, but an Opportunity shot cancels the negative CS modifier for target movement." The beginning of Step 2 of the Area Effect Weapon Combat Procedure should read: "Apply all appropriate combat modifiers, Dexterity modifiers, and shift columns to the left and/or right." The first sentence of Step 3 should read: "Roll percentile dice and locate the final result on the Resolution Table." The fourth sentence of Step 3 can be deleted altogether, as this information was spread throughout the Grenades and Missiles sections. In the Skills section, note that the distance a character can throw a grenade is equal to his Strength score plus his Dexterity score, divided by four; i.e., (STR + DEX)/4.

Page 34: The abbreviation "pS" indicates damage per each SEU used. The "Rate" note should be changed to "ROF," the "Defense Type" note should be changed to "Effective Defenses," and the "M#" note should be changed to "Msl#."

Page 35: The effective defense against the acid foam grenade should read "Salgel," not "Basegel."

Page 36: The "Range" column heading for missile warheads should be "Blast Radius." The blast radius of a sonic missile warhead is "6 × Msl#." Additionally, the Primitive Melee and Thrown Weapons Table should list Spear damage as 14, not 4.

Page 41: The last sentence for the Channeling I and Channeling II disciplines should be deleted and replaced with the sentence: "Each successful discipline use lasts 3 turns." Also, the Confusion discipline can only be used to affect a single target.

Pages 48-50: The names of the UPF Space Fortresses can be added to the tables of planets:

Planet	Fortress
Moonworld	Defiant
Kdikit	Kdikit
Morgaine's World	Gollwin
Pale	Pale
Gollywog	Redoubt

Page 50: The second planet in the Cryxian system of the Rim Coalition Planetary listing is "T'zaan" (delete the "(B)T" note).

Page 65: The warheads come in different sizes for each missile type and are not interchangeable.

Page 69: Sonic screens or sonic headphones provide full protection from the effects of marble grenades unless three or more are detonated at the same time. The third marble grenade, and all others following it which detonate in the same turn, are then treated as polyhedron sonic grenades for defense purposes.

Page 73: The paragraph at the end of the Combining Hardware and Maxiprogs section lists various combinations of maxiprogs that a Level 2 Mainframe Computer could have. Delete the words "or one Level 4 maxiprog" from the example. As is stated later, a mainframe computer cannot run a maxiprog of greater level than the computer level.

Page 90: There are a few mistakes under the Energy Use or Max. Damage Absorbed column of the Defenses list. The Simp Screen should read "1 SEU/ 6 pts." Full Maser Mesh should read "Negates Maser damage." Partial Maser Mesh should read "Halves Maser damage." Both Basic Helmet and Sonic Prot. should read "V."

Page 91: On the first side of the STAR FRONTIERS Character Record Sheet, under the Weapons section, a player should enter his PC's DEX or STR modifier, whichever he chooses, along with the Column Modifier in the "Col Mod" box. See the Ability section under Melee Procedure on page 32. Ω

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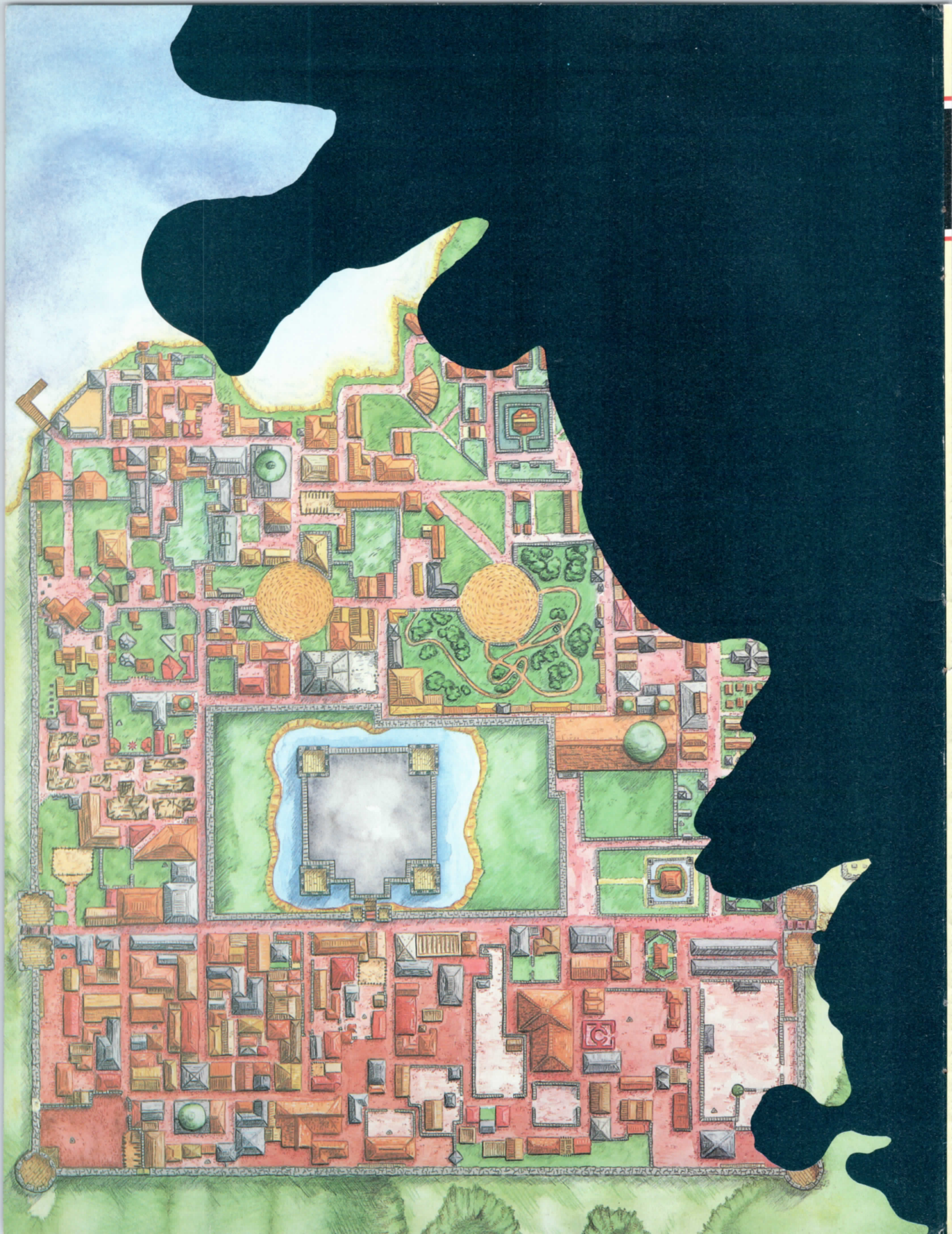

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Role-playing Reviews

A look at three fantasy adventures

©1987 by Ken Rolston

The Grey Knight
(a PENDRAGON game adventure)
Chaosium Inc. $7.95
Author: Larry DiTillio
Director: Greg Stafford
Cover and interior illustrations: Susan Seddon Boulet
Editing and production: Charlie Krank

Treasure Hunt
(an AD&D® game adventure)
TSR, Inc. $8.00
Design: Aaron Allston
Editor: Steve Winter
Cover: Jeff Easley
Interior art: Stephen Fabian

Phantom of the Northern Marches
(three MERP™ game adventures)
Iron Crown Enterprises $6.00
Design: Graham Staplehurst
Editors: Peter Fenlon, S. Coleman Charlton
Cover: Daniel Horne
Interior illustrations: Steven Peregrine

It wasn't so very long ago that I was buying "modules" — that's what they used to call packaged dungeon adventures (and, later, wilderness adventures) that you used with fantasy role-playing (FRP) games. Despite this, I remember having a rather snobbish attitude toward people who actually *ran* the modules they bought. "*Real* people design their own dungeons and adventures" was the attitude many sophisticated gamers took, though it was okay to buy modules to steal ideas — and, well, just for the fun of reading new FRP trash. But we also bought modules because we were fans, and we bought *anything* that had to do with dungeons and goblins and mad wizards with flame-throwers.

I know lots of folks ran those modules. I ran a few myself — I particularly liked the *Steading of the Hill Giant Chief, Apple Lane,* and *Snake Pipe Hollow,* to mention a few classics. By and large, those early FRP adventures were maps with room descriptions keyed to them, and handy stats for the critters you were supposed to butcher. Nowadays, we expect a bit more from FRP adventure supplements.

Adventure/campaign supplements

The term "module" is somewhat out of fashion, for commercial reasons too tedious to go into here (meaning I don't fully understand myself). Now, support material for FRP games breaks down into two general categories: adventure supplements and campaign supplements.

Adventure supplements are the lineal descendants of the original modules: the adventure itself — fully designed for the GM, with lots of maps, references, and other nice bits — is the focus of the presentation, with campaign background in the . . . well . . . background. In campaign supplements, the FRP setting is the focus. The background is given, and the GM is expected to design the adventure himself. But campaign supplements are next month's topic. 'Nuff said here.

Narrative values: A good FRP adventure has many of the best features of good fantasy fiction — written in an entertaining style, with emotionally engaging characters, a setting full of the magical and alien, and a series of exciting or intriguing episodes that lead to a dramatic conclusion. The best adventures read like a good fantasy story; the worst don't read well at all. (That was the most obnoxious thing about the early modules — they were *terrible* reading.)

Ease of reference: The layout and structure should make it as easy as possible for the GM to find what he needs during adventure sessions. Unfortunately, this objective often seems to run directly counter to the goal of making the adventure readable. Material designed for reference — dictionaries, software manuals, grammar handbooks, FRP game rules, etc. — are notoriously painful reading. Designs which achieve both readability *and* ease of reference, through clever layout and presentation, deserve our admiration.

Staging: Good adventures also need staging tips, which are hints to the GM on how to present the adventure effectively (e.g., how to handle tricky situations, how to bring NPCs to life, what to do if the players do something weird, etc.).

Adventures always told GMs what to do,

but not very much about how to do it. Many recent adventure supplements are giving more attention to the art of game-mastering. Some designers may hesitate to spell out what seem to them the basic tricks of game-mastering for fear of appearing patronizing to the experienced and sophisticated gamers they imagine their audience to be. In fact, many of us don't own the Helm of Gamemaster Excellence, and even the best of us benefit from watching other masters at work. The opportunity to listen in on the designer's thoughts as he presents his adventure can be valuable, even for venerable veterans like me.

Nice bits: I'm a sucker for good-looking or clever components that reduce the GM's preparation and reference workload or that add to the adventure's fantasy atmosphere. On the other hand, I am impatient with careless or ill-conceived materials that seem just to fill space, or pull-out chop-ups that seem to be there just because every other adventure has them.

Strong visual presentation: The cover and interior illustrations should help the GM visualize key settings, characters, and dramatic high points of the narrative. The tone and content of the art should support and reinforce the adventure elements and atmosphere. (I've seen plenty of good art that didn't fit the adventure in content or in tone.)

Maps, diagrams, and illustrations should be used wherever possible instead of text. For instance, a room diagram is much easier to review and refer to during the session than a prose description. The layout should be attractive, but only if it can also improve ease of reference and make the text's structure clear at a glance.

Let's take a look at the adventure supplements under inspection this month, and see how they measure up against these and various other elements of superior adventure design.

The Grey Knight

A solid winner, best-in-show. This has first-class visuals, superb narrative values, an innovative layout that permits ease of reference with minimum interference with the narrative, and creditable showings in the staging and nice-bits categories.

Look at Boulet's cover — grim, grey, and fey. Her interior pieces are perfect for the gruesome, mysterious, and darkly magical characters and episodes she illustrates. Throughout the text, the shield heraldry in the margins is integral to the adventure, not just slap-dash space-fillers.

The adventure itself is the real prize. The author, Larry DiTillio, is a master narrative technician, and he's working with the rich resources of the Arthurian legend and the unique PENDRAGON game system, designed by Greg Stafford to support moral dilemmas and tests of character as well as hack-and-slash combat and fireball barbecues. The narrative makes superb use of major figures of the Arthurian legends; in the first few pages, the characters have interacted with major villain, hero, and comic figures from the legends, not to mention a walk-on for Arthur and Guenever. The prominence of the major Arthurian characters is not without its liabilities — the main action centers on pivotal Arthurian characters, casting the PCs in a significant but secondary role — but the liabilities are more than compensated for by the richness of the Arthurian campaign setting.

Moreover, DiTillio has developed the mystical, magical element of the Arthurian legends that previous PENDRAGON materials have failed to effectively exploit. To date, PENDRAGON supplements have been strongest in their chivalric content — perfectly satisfactory for good role-playing, but not quite *fantasy* role-playing. In *The Grey Knight*, the player characters still have no magical abilities — but every encounter menaces them with the challenge of the weird and otherworldly. Undead knights, succubi, shapeshifters, allegorical beasts in mortal combat, restless spirits of the unforgiven dead, a journey to the Other World, a *really* dangerous giant, and the wiles of a beautiful witch — this adventure reeks with magic, foul and fair.

The layout is strikingly original and utilitarian, and employs a clever device to minimize the conflict between the demands of readability and easy reference. Each page is printed in one wide column with the text describing the sequence of events, the setting, and the characters. This text reads wonderfully — more like a novel or tale than a game adventure. In the margin next to the text are printed short phrases that function as concise GM notes, and brief notations about attribute and personality trait tests. These short notes simplify reference to the text during the session, and removing them to the margin prevents them from interrupting the flow of the narrative. One false note: Neither the text nor the marginal notes give the stats of the creatures encountered (the GM is referred to the rule books and handouts from the PENDRAGON game). Nor are many staging tips given for combat — a minor fault, but inconvenient for anyone not experienced with the PENDRAGON system.

Summary evaluation: Fine writing and illustration with exceptional tone and richness. Modest player characters enter into an epic landscape and narrative. Innovative design and presentation. Bravo, bravissimo.

Treasure Hunt

An adventure for zero-level characters? And they're shipwrecked with no gear and no idea what's going on?

My cup of tea.

I've always been a big fan of low-level adventures in which the characters are stripped of all their game-mechanics resources and forced to improvise with their wits. They are great as introductory adventures for new gamers, but are even more fun for experienced players, jaded by encounters with critters straight out of the "Biology Book" (*Monster Manual*) and with endless iterations of the *wand of incredible explosive events*.

This is a fine example of this sub-genre, with goblins and orcs, a friendly goddess, loony NPCs, dead guys, and all the things that make FRP great. On this basis alone, this is a nice product, but Aaron Allston adds a couple of nice bonuses in this design.

First, in the course of the adventure, the player characters graduate from zero level to 1st level. Their actions during the adventure are used by the GM to indicate the character class into which they graduate. For example, if a guy grabs weapons and whacks goblins with them, it's obvious that he's cut out to be a fighter. If a character shows special interest in the abandoned temple, well, he's destined to be a cleric. Record sheets for the GM to track PC behaviors are provided as handouts. It's a clever idea and interesting in its sensible implications about the hitherto obscure transformation from undifferentiated citizen to class-defined player-character adventurer.

Second, Allston does an outstanding job of explicit staging for the GM. For instance, he includes a two-page appendix entitled "If Things Go Wrong": a detailed, episode-by-episode treatment of ways to handle the player characters if they don't do what they're expected to do. The visit of a goddess, the classic deus-ex-machina, is handled particularly well. This would be a perfect choice for a beginning GM and an ideal adventure to include with the next revision of the AD&D game, but never did I feel that I was being talked down to.

Third, this adventure displays a refreshing flexibility and lack of fussiness in interpreting the AD&D game rules. Wherever the rules do not serve the purposes of the adventure, Allston provides a plausible rationale for sidestepping them. Actually, this is just common sense, but those accustomed to the narrow vision of TSR products in the past will be pleased to see this more open-minded, flexible attitude toward adapting rules to fit the circumstances, rather than vice versa.

The layout and presentation is generally good — Steve Winter is one of TSR's best editors — and the interior art is stylish, though the cover is unremarkable. The player maps on the inside cover are uninspired but functional. However, some layout choices seem obviously wrong. For example, there is a two-page "Players' Introduction" at the beginning of the adventure that each player is supposed to read himself, though it is not customary to let players read the module. This material would be much better as a player handout, and there are two 2-page player-

character tracking forms in the handout section where one would be enough. This seemed to me a case of a handout filling space, and space that could be well-used for a more appropriate purpose.

Summary evaluation: Superior low-level adventure, excellently staged. Quite readable, with a refreshingly flexible attitude toward rules interpretations. Ideal for introducing the uninitiated into FRP gaming, and well-presented for the less-experienced GMs.

Phantom of the Northern Marches

Iron Crown has always turned out nice-looking, well-written campaign supplements. Tolkien's Middle-earth® is a classy place to run fantasy role-playing, and ICE has done a good job in preserving the dignity and intelligence of Tolkien's setting.

However, neither the supplements for the ROLEMASTER™ nor those for the MERP™ games have been any great shakes in the packaged adventure department. They have eschewed many of the features considered essential by other RPG designers (prepared player characters with background notes, player handouts and other pull-out "nice bits," and so forth). Adventures they have presented are often in the map-keyed description format of more primitive adventure modules. Background notes on NPCs, villages, local customs, and such have always been pretty good, and there's little to complain about the graphics — it's just the narrative and staging values which have been weak.

In ICE's defense, they have avoided the typical hew-and-loot adventures popular with other, less-elevated campaign backgrounds. For all that I like Allston's *Treasure Hunt*, the situation is painfully contrived from a narrative standpoint. Of course, it's only a game, and we dungeon hackers have never been too fastidious about swallowing rather flimsy narrative pretexts if some heroic swashbuckling and sorcerous troll-baking is promised.

The best thing about the three adventures in *Phantom* is the lack of painful contrivance in the plots. The fantasy elements in the adventures fit smoothly and plausibly into Tolkien's world. The motivations of the major villains are psychologically convincing, rather than comic-book caricatures of evil, as is common in other FRP adventures.

Staplehurst provides the narrative and staging values so obtrusively absent in earlier adventure supplements. I've always been a bit uncomfortable with ICE's "ready-to-run" claim on their adventure covers, but these adventures make good on the claim. Unfortunately, the presentation style doesn't make the narrative and staging virtues obvious. The emphasis is still on the adventure as reference text, and though the individual sections and essays read well enough, a little writing technology (e.g., smoother transitions, summaries and overviews) and a touch of magazine-style layout (e.g., blending text and diagram, graphic emphasis of text structure) would make the material more readable.

There still seems to be a purposeful avoidance of some of the packaged adventure features that are commonplace in other game systems. For example, stats are given for *18* player characters. Certainly a lot to choose from — but where are the background notes and role-playing guides? You could argue that *good* players don't need such support — but you could similarly argue that *good* GMs don't need adventure or campaign supplements. Prepared PC background notes can be effective models of PC characterization, even if they are never used in a session.

But, for all my complaints, I highly recommend these adventures. They are intelligent, well-motivated, well-staged, and they make effective use of their fantasy elements without becoming conventional dungeon arcades. Above all, they are consistent with the tone of their Middle-earth campaign background — a high standard to aspire to.

Summary evaluation: Three strong adventures for the Middle-earth campaign setting. Intelligent, well-staged. Strong narrative values, with plausibly motivated characters and plausibly integrated fantasy elements. Presentation and layout are not particularly effective in emphasizing these values.

Short and sweet

DUNGEON™ Adventures. TSR, Inc. For $3.75 per issue (or $18.00 for a six-issue subscription), you get 64 pages of short AD&D and D&D® game adventures of various lengths, themes, and tones by various FRP writers — some amateurs, some professionals. The adventures in issue #1 remind me of the selection of game sessions you find at gaming conventions or in old-fashioned modules — "The Dark Tower of Cabilar," "Assault on Eddistone Point," "Grakhirt's Lair." Cheap and cheerful, full of the basic fun of D&D games.

At the same time, the anthology format lets you publish fine little bits, like Anne McCready's "The Elven Home" that left me thinking: "So *that's* what D&D game elves are like. . . ." Such anthologies are great training grounds for new writers and offer an opportunity to experiment with offbeat themes and tones.

Yes, sophisticated gamers will find a lot to snicker at here, but there are some cute ideas. The writing ranges from young and enthusiastic to polished, and when compared with some of TSR's current modules (like *The Books of Lairs*, reviewed below), the quality of the layout and graphics is quite decent. And for the price, you can't go wrong.

The Book of Lairs (James Ward and Mike Breault) and *The Book of Lairs II* (various authors). TSR, Inc., $12.00 each. These 96-page anthologies are a series of one- and two-page adventures centered around various AD&D game critters from the various *Monster Manuals*. The monsters featured range from the ever-popular orcs, trolls, goblins, and dwarves to the obscure and exceptionally exotic hybsils, shedu, remorhaz, and otyugh.

Most of these oddball critters you would never want in your campaigns, but you might get a kick out of seeing how a clever and dedicated soul could bring them to life. A good writer can get a lot of character and atmosphere into a short piece. On both accounts, the second book is considerably more successful than the first. The first book's encounters are pretty conventional AD&D game problems rather than ingenious explorations of the personalities of the creatures involved. Though they might be entertaining as gaming challenges, they are short on charm and character. The second book has the advantage of being written by various writers in a variety of tones and styles, and is generally more offbeat and inventive. The narrative values are also generally better served, with nice bits of plot, character, and setting to add flavor to the basic encounter problems. In general, not bad at all and occasionally delightful — Allen Varney's little bits in particular.

Both are graphically disappointing. The first book brings to mind the old days of TSR illustration — not a positive association — but at least the art and diagrams seem to illustrate the text it accompanies. The few diagrams in the second book are remarkably primitive; the illustration is uniformly lifted from old *Monster Manuals* and adventures, and not exactly choice illustrations at that.

Green and Pleasant Land: The British 1920s-30s Cthulhu Sourcepack. Games Workshop (distributed in U.S. through Chaosium Inc.), $10.95. Oh, simply smashing, what? Here's an excerpt illustrating the role of butlers as player characters in CALL OF CTHULHU® games:

"Dwat, and double dwat," lisped Algernon de Vere Skeffley (Bart), hefting the shotgun by its barrels as the tentacled monstrosity shambled its way toward the party. "Deuced inconvenient time to wun out of cartwidges, what?" Behind him, Simmonds shuddered slightly at the sacrilegious thought of Messrs Purdey's finest being used as a blunt instrument, and coughed discreetly. "If I may suggest, sir, I took the liberty of bringing along a pick handle I found while we were coming through the cellar. Perhaps you would care to make use of that, while I reload for you?"

Oh, so civilized, and oh, so eccentric. Splendid settings and inspirations for unspeakable horrors are offered in the first half, the sourcepack, with three adventures and a piece of short fiction in the second half. Excellent layout, fine illustrations, entertaining, and readable. Don't miss it. Ω

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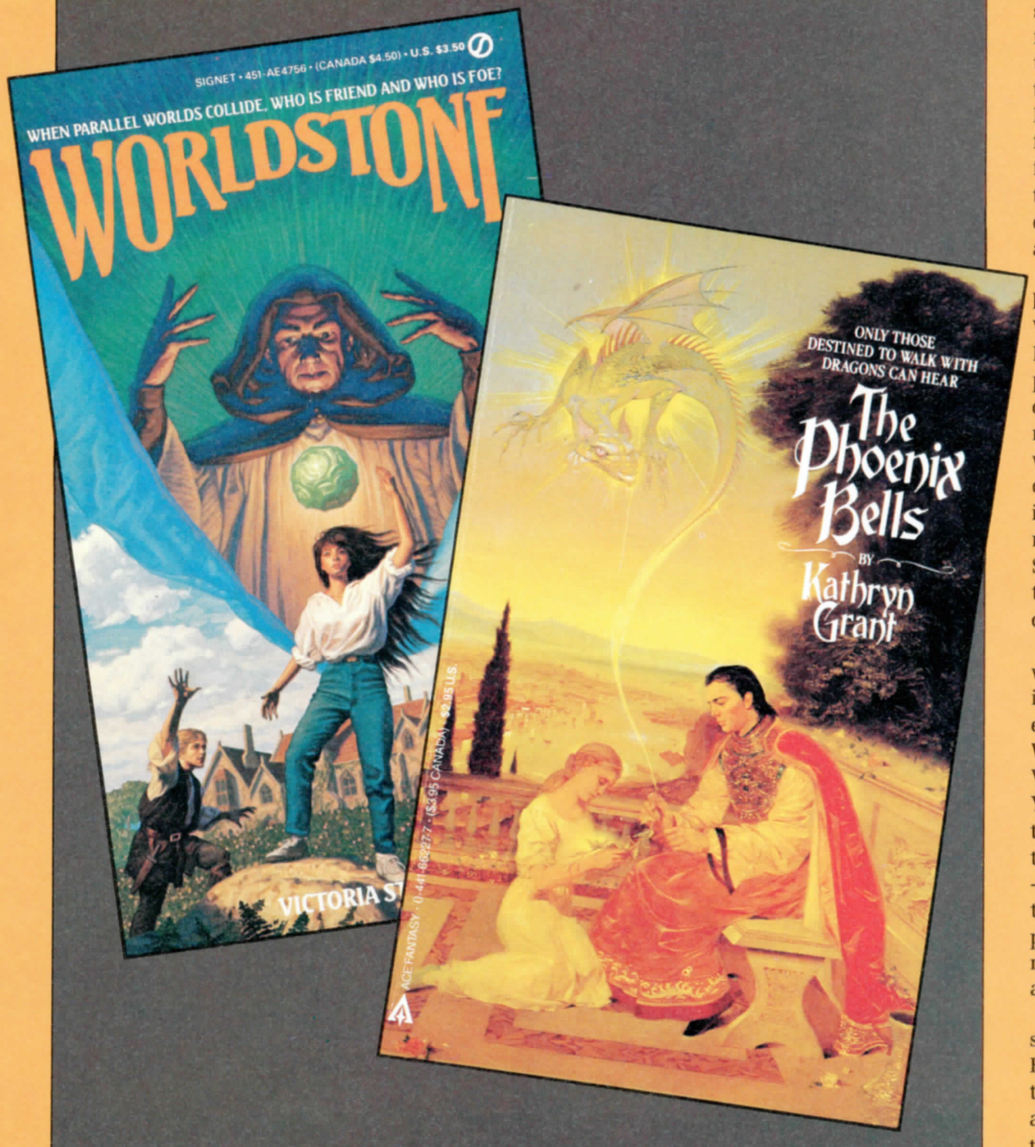
The Role of Books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WHEN PARALLEL WORLDS COLLIDE, WHO IS FRIEND AND WHO IS FOE?
WORLDSTONE
VICTORIA S
ONLY THOSE DESTINED TO WALK WITH DRAGONS CAN HEAR
The Phoenix Bells
BY
Kathryn Grant
ACE FANTASY

Alternate and alien worlds galore

by John C. Bunnell

THE MISPLACED LEGION
Harry Turtledove
Del Rey 0-345-33067-8 $2.95

AN EMPEROR FOR THE LEGION
Harry Turtledove
Del Rey 0-345-33068-4 $3.50

Its squarely traditional ingredients should make the Videssos cycle easy to pigeonhole. But Harry Turtledove has neatly inverted the conventions of fantasy warfare, and that makes the first two books of this sequence an unexpected blend of plausibility, alien magic, and very human characters.

The Misplaced Legion starts out with a standard premise: The heroes are snatched out of reality and stranded in a foreign realm ruled by different gods and touched with genuine magic. The twist is that Turtledove's protagonists are ancient Romans (and a lone Celt), who begin the first chapter in the forests of Gaul, only to find themselves in another world after tribune Marcus Scaurus crosses ensorcelled swords with his legion's Celtic adversary.

The rest of the book chronicles the legion's adjustment to life in the Empire of Videssos, which is both like and unlike the Rome that has been left behind. There is political intrigue in plenty, the Emperor's court is crowded with dangerous diplomats and equally dangerous officials, and war with a major barbarian horde is in the offing. In order to retain their cultural identity, the Roman legion signs on as a mercenary force for the empire — and Scaurus, its commander, finds himself tangled in diverse magical and mundane conflicts.

The second book directly addresses the war and the imperial succession, which is in some question following the reigning emperor's death at the first book's climax. While the Romans are still outsiders in Videssos, they are too busy coping with Yezd barbarians and a rival for the throne to worry very much about the fact. And there is still evil magic in the background — concealed by a truly ancient author's trick that Turtledove shouldn't be able to pull off. Amazingly, it works, and this reader at least caught on only a few pages ahead of the legionnaires.

Turtledove's research appears quite solid, and the device of translating the Romans to an alternate world allows him to display a great deal of it without coming across as a lecturer. The result is a startlingly realistic tone, which has the dual effect of making the Romans easy for readers to sympathize with and making the alien aspects of Videssan culture stand out from its everyday routine. The battle scenes and tactics also ring true — *War Machine* and BATTLESYSTEM™ supplement devotees are very likely to linger

thoughtfully over those sequences. Videssos may have vast religious and magical differences from historical Rome, but its wars and political crises are not so unique.

All of this makes the *Legion* books partly historical fantasy, partly sword and sorcery, and partly an intriguing symbolic construct. For tales that are also plain solid adventure fare, that's not bad at all.

THE PHOENIX BELLS
Kathryn Grant
Ace 0-441-66227-7 $2.95

There's a potentially absorbing story somewhere inside *The Phoenix Bells* trying to get out. But a host of seeming contradictions and vague intentions is fighting that story every step of the way, making Kathryn Grant's book generally more confusing than satisfying.

Nowhere does the cover give definite indications that Grant is dealing in Oriental fantasy. Inside, though, the title page calls the tale "A Fantasy of a China That Never Was" — which is where the problems begin. The subtitle is strikingly similar to that of Barry Hughart's *Bridge of Birds*, inviting comparisons the present novel can't hope to win. It's a touch author or publisher should have resisted, and it creates unreasonable expectations in readers' minds.

Worse still, the subtitle isn't even strictly accurate. Less than a quarter of the way through the book, Grant abandons the implied wonders of Emperor Ty-Sun's Land of Ten Thousand Willows and sends the ruler on a voyage deep into the West in search of a bride. From Oriental fantasy, the tale shifts to a sort of reverse twist on the travels of Marco Polo, as the entourage arrives first in Russia and then journeys to France and England. Grant takes care to use the right kings and tsars, but the Russian segment seems overly unpleasant, and there is a very strange dimension to Grant's seventeenth-century English religious politics. As historical fare, the novel is therefore quite weak.

Religion itself is the next and most serious stumbling block, going to the heart of the tale's conflict (which concerns a vague but dangerous evil power bent on conquering Ty-Sun's empire). While at home, Ty-Sun can summon up Chinese gods quite casually, and he has learned considerable spellcraft as their pupil. Which is fine — except that Fray Villadiego, a Jesuit who has attached himself to the imperial court in hopes of converting Ty-Sun to Christianity, seems to be a spy for the evil power. And the British Lord Elphinstone turns out to be a practicing Druid whose mystic powers are nearly as potent as Ty-Sun's. It's nearly impossible to guess who really controls Grant's cosmos, and the surplus of belief systems leaves the basic rules of magic in doubt as well, confusing readers and characters alike.

Yet the characters, notably Ty-Sun and his chief concubine, Spring Rain, are what make *The Phoenix Bells* readable despite the pitfalls. Then again, it may be the pitfalls that make the characters endearing — Grant's rendering of the emperor's bewilderment nicely matches the helpless feelings readers may have, and that makes sympathizing with Ty-Sun an easy proposition. The narrative's sense of personality is appealing, and its tone is agreeably light.

Grant's world, unfortunately, isn't yet solid enough to pin these virtues on. But two books remain in her planned trilogy, and answers to the questions posed by this volume are definitely worth hoping for.

WORLDSTONE
Victoria Strauss
Signet/NAL 0-451-14756-1 $3.50

It's possible to disagree about the characters who populate *Worldstone* — readers may be frustrated by their refusal to fall into neat hero and villain molds, some will credit author Victoria Strauss with unusual skill in creating people who stubbornly refuse to be so easily categorized. But debating characterization ignores the novel's real flaw: Strauss hasn't adequately defined the artifact at the story's heart, leaving her conflict adrift with nowhere to anchor itself.

The Worldstone has immutable power and total knowledge, existing at the center of all things in what was once a single world. But late in the Arthurian era, stress between psionics and technology (or mindpower and handpower, in Strauss's terms) split one world into two, with the psychics taking possession of the Worldstone. Their world became a low-tech dictatorship, while ours developed into modern Earth.

The first difficulty with this is that the Worldstone turns out to be self-aware. It's hard to understand how an entity in command of such awesome resources could allow the world to get so far "out of balance" that a split could occur. And even given the division, the stone should still have full awareness of both worlds — which it doesn't. As the "center of all things," the Worldstone is inconsistent.

Also inconsistent is Strauss's treatment of handpower and mindpower. On one hand, they're supposed to be opposing forces, the cause of the split of the worlds. Supporting this logic is the fact that those born of one world cannot sense the stone's whereabouts while it is in the other. Yet the two supposedly equal and opposite powers have different effects on the stone, which has survived millennia of psychic manipulation more or less intact but is effectively (if only temporarily) enslaved when it's hooked up to a computer system. And it eventually becomes clear that the real conflict is one of attitude rather than pure power — in fact, Strauss's opponents are more like than unlike, both sides bent on preserving their own powers rather than following the paths of right.

What the "right" paths may be, though, is anyone's guess. They're not those of the psychics, led by Marhalt, who follow the Worldstone's thief into our world. Bron, the thief who hopes his computers will harness the Worldstone's power for his own ends, is no better a role model. And Alexina Taylor, drawn into the struggle by an accidental mindlink, finds herself prevented by both sides from taking lasting action with her own mental powers. (It may even be impossible for characters to improve if Strauss's gloomy portrait of the state of the worlds is valid.)

Vagueness about a magical item's properties isn't usually enough to destroy the fabric of a novel or game adventure. *Worldstone* is an unhappy exception to that rule, and not even last-second hints of a sequel make up for the illogic.

SEVENTH SON
Orson Scott Card
Tor 0-312-93019-4 $17.95

Suppose the American Revolution had turned out differently, leaving the Atlantic coastline divided between British Crown Colonies, a smaller United States, and an independent "New England." Suppose several decades of territorial expansion had brought the frontier of civilization into what we call the Old Northwest. Suppose that a kind of folk magic, born of common sense, herb lore, and second sight, works in this alternate America. Into this world bring the seventh son of a seventh son, traditional heir to magic beyond imagining. So begin Orson Scott Card's tales of Alvin Maker, chronicles that take fantasy into realms almost entirely unexplored.

Seventh Son isn't a hack-and-slash adventure with monsters at every turn, nor is it a riddle-quest with mysteries to unravel every third chapter. Card's story is about growth and order; he draws broad, understated parallels between Alvin's boyhood and America's development, and between civilization's mundane trappings and the less tangible concepts of Making and Unmaking. Yet the tale is no less compelling for the absence of traditional fireworks. Strongly conceived characters and the dangerous realities of frontier existence combine with nature-driven magic to give *Seventh Son* both a sense of immediacy and a sense of myth.

That may not seem like the stuff of exciting role-playing, and in fact the world of Card's novel is not really suited for gaming in the AD&D® game mold. But the concept of "knacks" is easily adaptable as RPG magic, and a skill-based game (*Rolemaster*, perhaps, or a modified superhero system) might provide the foundation for an unusual campaign devoted to cultural advancement rather than treasure-finding.

Whether readers find new directions for gaming in *Seventh Son*, though, they will definitely acquire a unique and fascinating

perspective on American history and a high degree of respect for Orson Scott Card's literary skills. This is a novel of extraordinary thoughtfulness, which could very well turn out to be a literary classic in a hundred years or so. Further tales of Alvin Maker will be well worth seeking.

ONCE UPON A MURDER
Robert Randisi and Kevin Randle
TSR/Windwalker 0-88038-450-6 $2.95

Collaborators Robert Randisi and Kevin Randle owe a literary debt to mystery writer Charlotte MacLeod, whose *The Curse of the Giant Hogweed* (reviewed in this column a year ago) rests on the same premise as their *Once Upon a Murder*. Yet while both tales involve modern-day sleuths caught up in medieval whodunits, Randisi and Randle have managed to turn their story in sufficiently different directions to distinguish it from its predecessor.

This time, the detective is Chicago gumshoe Miles Paladon, who has the singular bad luck to be gunned down in a dark alley at the same cosmic instant that Prince Paladon of Palandrum is shot by a mysterious archer near the site of a recent battle. At least it seems like bad luck — but considering the fact that Miles and the prince are identical twins, and that the prince's enemies may have access to unknown wizardry, it's hard to be sure.

What's important is that Miles finds himself in control of the prince's body, while the prince tags along as a mental presence and Miles's body lies comatose in a Chicago hospital. In order to be restored to his own time and place, Miles must figure out which member of Palandrum's bickering royal family murdered the prince. (Prince Paladon will die permanently when Miles is sent home.)

Though there are the expected laconic wisecracks spicing the narration, Randisi and Randle have given their yarn rather less comedy than MacLeod's, while providing a neatly plotted — and entirely fair — puzzle and a stronger dose of genuine spellcraft. The interaction between Miles and Prince Paladon is well-crafted, and despite a slightly overdeveloped taste for corny names, the tale comes across as a faithful descendent of both the private-eye yarn and the fantasy-intrigue novel. If the major wizard weren't so predictably irascible (and if his name was anything but "Moribund"), the prospect of more stories about Miles Paladon would carry no reservations whatever.

KNIGHT LIFE
Peter David
Ace 0-441-45130-6 $2.95

It's getting harder by the month to wax enthusiastic about comic fantasies, especially comic fantasies involving New York City. There are just so many of them! But Peter David's tale of King Arthur's introduction to contemporary politics breaks through all the sighs and protests of "Not again!" to find a comfortable place in the ranks of both humorous and Arthurian adventures.

Knight Life is situation comedy in the most literal sense, and it wastes no time getting underway. Inside 15 pages, both Arthur and Morgan Le Fey are firmly established in modern America, and the character of the tale has been clearly set. Events occur at an even, nonstop pace that betrays David's background as a comic-book writer, and the requirements of Arthurian tradition and suspense are both fulfilled in good measure.

The novel's great virtue is that, having established his premise, David plays his characters — and the narration — with a calmly logical sincerity that is utterly convincing. Arthur and his associates behave as if there's nothing odd about a legendary king coming out of several centuries' retirement to launch a political career. His mayoral opponents gradually begin to realize they are dealing with a thoroughly preposterous situation, but can't stop trying to handle it logically. And logic, of course, has very little to do with anything connected to King Arthur.

The scenario David has chosen for the novel might have been dangerously predictable, but the deadpan humor and Morgan Le Fey's ever-devious machinations combine to make the road to the climax as rugged and circuitous as a path through the Amazon jungle. And a wickedly clever post-election twist both confirms David's skill as a craftsman and promises to give most readers a genuine shock.

Knight Life only requires one cautionary note. Though David has left openings for a second book, it's difficult to imagine a sequel that could improve on the original without mining the same ground. In this case, David would be well advised to look for other characters to populate his next novel. This one is simply too good to waste as the start of one more average series.

CIRCUIT BREAKER
Melinda M. Snodgrass
Berkley 0-425-09776-5 $2.95

Colonists are almost ready to begin terraforming Mars into a lush, livable world when a high-powered environmental action group files a lawsuit to stop the project. Who gets the complex job of deciding this landmark legal dispute? Cabot Huntington, the interplanetary circuit justice featured in Melinda Snodgrass's series of novels about the settlement of the solar system.

While *Circuit Breaker* quotes enough case law to satisfy all but the most curmudgeonly law professors (Snodgrass is a former attorney), readers need not expect a dry, detached narrative. Huntington's judicial territory is as wild a frontier as the old West, and enemies both on Earth and elsewhere are out to sway or dispose of the judge. Among the players are a power-crazed White House official, a synthetic gem manufacturer threatened by Martian diamond mining, the largely Mormon colonists, and the daughter of a major interplanetary political leader. Even the Nicaraguan government gets into the act.

The blend of solid legal reasoning and hair-trigger intrigue makes distinctive reading, and Snodgrass has a few clever, if not quite unpredictable, plot twists up her sleeve. Yet some concerns remain. A potent romantic triangle takes up one subplot, with sex explicit enough to worry the parents of at least some young readers. (The plot is legitimate, but the descriptions seem inappropriately detailed — and sometimes a touch violent — for this broad an audience.)

The novel's climax raises a different question, as Huntington's judicial status becomes doubtful following a chain of deceptions and bad luck. It's possible to praise Snodgrass for letting her series develop new directions, but it seems unfair to allow such an unusual hero to escape such a unique role.

But reservations aside, *Circuit Breaker* passes one major test for reader satisfaction. Once this column is in the mail, I'll head for the bookstore to find a copy of *Circuit*, its predecessor. I want to know what I missed in the first book.

RECURRING ROLES

For those who have wondered, the admiring quote in paperback editions of *A Darkness at Sethanon* (Bantam Spectra, $3.95) and earlier volumes of Raymond Feist's Riftwar saga belongs to someone else — and dates from far enough back that I can't locate the issue of DRAGON Magazine in which it appears. Though the comparison to Tolkien is slightly overenthusiastic, the saga is well worth reading. Feist's Midkemia does recall Middle-earth in character, but the cycle's style and scope owe as much to Stephen R. Donaldson. Whatever their origins, the Riftwar books are now justifiably among the most popular in modern fantasy.

No such justification explains the success of Dennis McKiernan's tales of Mithgar. *Trek to Kraggen-Cor* (Signet, $2.95) continues his pattern of hobbit worship and begins a two-part story borrowed heavily from the "mines of Moria" sections of *The Lord of the Rings*. Not only are the sources of McKiernan's ideas obvious, they're almost recreated — and the only new material, notably a long, overly detailed battle with a "Watcher in the Water" lookalike, would have been better omitted. The biographical notes claim that McKiernan's previous trilogy was "critically acclaimed;" anyone who can find the favorable reviews is urged to contact this column.

As usual, new series entries are piling up, with the best being Louise Cooper's

The Master (Tor, $3.50). This conclusion to the Time Master trilogy fulfills the promise of the first two books and brings the battle of law and chaos to a stunning climax. Cooper's books may be an acquired taste for some, but they are like little else in print in their treatment of honor's battle against principle.

The Heir Apparent (Signet, $3.50) continues Joel Rosenberg's chronicles of a band of fantasy gamers making their way in a genuine fantasy world, and introduces a new generation of characters, including a mysterious faerie queen who may have vague connections with master wizard Arta Myrdhyn/Arthur Deighton, the architect of the entire affair. This is action-adventure at its most frenzied, and it's an open question whether series hero Karl Cullinane will be around in the next book.

The second volume of the superhero shared world overseen by George R.R. Martin is *Wild Cards II: Aces High*(Bantam Spectra, $3.95), which comes even closer to being a novel than did the first. There is a shift in emphasis from the earlier book, with more razzle-dazzle action and slightly less psychological depth, but the *Wild Cards* project remains one of the strongest shared worlds available and one of the few meriting an unqualified recommendation. Superhero RPG fans will be pleased.

Jack Chalker's busy schedule finds two series tales newly available in the same month. *Pirates of the Thunder* (Del Rey, $3.50) continues the sequence begun in *Lords of the Middle Dark*, generally confirming impressions created by the earlier book. It's satisfactory space adventure, but with an odd fixation on body reconstruction, and the book's climax seems to forecast the end of the series. The concept offered in *The Labyrinth of Dreams* (Tor, $3.50) seems more promising — a corporate empire based on interdimensional commerce — but Chalker's geography falters when he tries to locate McInerney, Oregon, in a part of the state where redwoods don't grow and the mountains don't correspond to his description. Aside from the misplaced landmarks, this tale too is credible but not spectacular.

Runespear (Questar, $3.50) offers more fireworks for the dollar, and may be the closest yet at recapturing the spirit of the Indiana Jones films. Victor Milan and Melinda Snodgrass join forces in a yarn of a Nazi-sponsored quest for the fabled spear of Odin himself. The flavor is quite unlike either author's solo work, and both the treatment of Eskimo culture and the outcome of the search are handled with skill and wit. The second half moves more quickly than the first, but the novel as a whole is reasonably paced and definitely worth checking out.

Also worth investigating, if for a rather odd reason, is R.A. MacAvoy's novel *The Grey Horse* (Bantam Spectra, $3.95). As usual, MacAvoy expertly creates atmosphere and character, this time of Ireland early in this century and a being who is not exactly a horse and not exactly a man. The story is chiefly a romance, and for once MacAvoy seems not to know exactly how to conclude her tale, but even at less than full strength she writes circles around much of her competition. What may attract AD&D game players in particular is the resemblance between MacAvoy's hero and the *Oriental Adventures* race of hengeyokai.

Finally, David Eddings begins a series where his five-volume Belgariad left off in *Guardians of the West* (Del Rey, $16.95). Though the characters are agreeably familiar and the quest they must undertake is satisfyingly heroic in proportion, it's a bit irritating to note that Eddings wants his protagonists to have the rewards of experience — kingship and so forth — but not the everyday responsibilities, which are cast aside as soon as another epic danger arrives. And the prophecy, which provided much of the uniqueness of the earlier cycle, is much less in evidence this time. All in all, the best advice is probably to wait for the paperback. Ω

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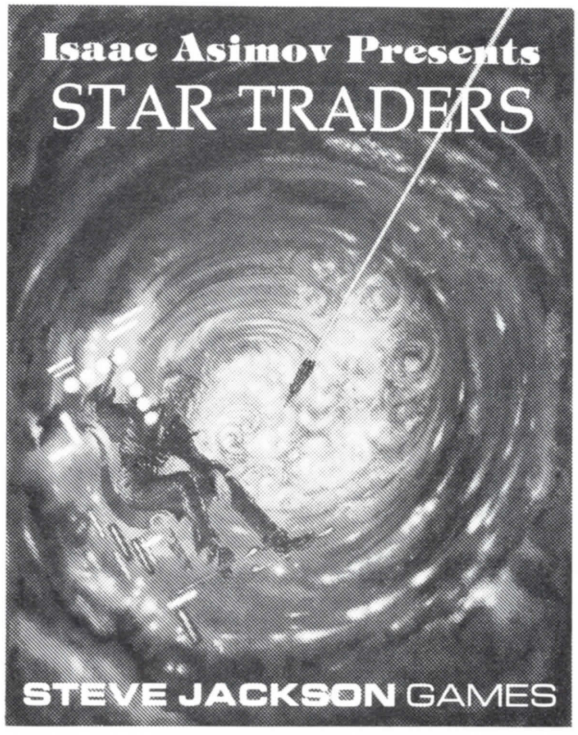

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The Marvel®-Phile

From Abomination™ to Zzzax™

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by Jeff Grubb

The last time we met, we reviewed the new, improved, meaner-than-ever Hulk. The new Hulk is twice as nasty but not as strong as the old Hulk. But what about the Hulk's old foes who could give old Jade Jaws a run for his money in their day?

Read on — from Abomination to Zzzax, as the saying goes (with a bonus hero: the good Doc Samson).

ABOMINATION™

Tyrannus of Subterranea

F	EX (20)	Health: 240
A	EX (20)	
S	UN (100)	Karma: 110
E	UN (100)	
R	AM (50)	Resources: FE (2)*
I	EX (20)	
P	IN (40)	Popularity: −40

* Tyrannus, in his original form, controlled the resources of the underground kingdom of Subterranea (Shift Y Resources), which are presently denied him in his monstrous form.

KNOWN POWERS:

Body Armor: Abomination's scaly skin provides Amazing protection against physical and energy attacks. He has Unearthly resistance to cold, heat, fire, and disease. Extreme temperatures or lack of oxygen can force him to go into a comalike state until more hospitable conditions return.

Leaping: Like the Hulk, the Abomination has overly developed leg muscles. These allow him to leap with Class 5000 ability, covering two miles in a single bound.

Mind-Scanning: This is an ability of Tyrannus brought over into his new form. Tyrannus can probe the thoughts of others with Amazing intensity.

Note: The Abomination, while more powerful than the Hulk, does not have the adrenaline surge ability that in the past permitted the Hulk to beat him.

TALENTS: The original Abomination, Emil Blonsky, had the espionage skill. The current incarnation is skilled with engineering, robotics, and weaponry.

CONTACTS: The original Abomination had numerous criminal contacts, including the now-deceased Modok. Tyrannus was leader of the Subterraneans, an underground race. In his long absence, his people have been ruled by the Mole Man.

ABOMINATION'S STORY: The original Abomination was Emil Blonsky, a spy for a foreign power, who discovered some

gamma-radiation equipment left behind by Bruce Banner. Unaware that the equipment was intended to overdose the Hulk with gamma radiation, Blonsky used the equipment on himself, transforming his body into the reptilian Abomination. The Abomination kept Emil's personality but, unlike the Hulk, could neither increase his own strength level through adrenaline nor transform back into Blonsky.

The Blonsky Abomination battled the Hulk on a number of occasions, usually as the minion of some more powerful force such as the Stranger, the Galaxy Master, or Modok. After several defeats by the Hulk, the Abomination was disintegrated by Modok as punishment. The component atoms of Abomination drifted off into the night.

Sometime earlier, the leader of the Subterranean people, Tyrannus, sought to conquer the surface world and was defeated by the Hulk and the criminal Goldbug. Tyrannus linked his life-force with the Flame of Life, a cobalt-powered eternal pyre of great power in mythical El Dorado. When the Hulk destroyed the ancient machinery controlling that flame, Tyrannus's life-force was forced into space.

Tyrannus, now a disembodied form, discovered the floating gamma-irradiated particles that once formed Emil Blonsky's Abomination. Using the last of his powers, Tyrannus merged his form with that of the particles. This combined the two into a single entity which landed in the American Southwest. Army soldiers investigating the crash discovered that the Abomination, now dominated by Tyrannus's personality, had returned.

Tyrannus and Blonsky both existed in the new Abomination, but Tyrannus had a plan to return to a more human form by separating Blonsky's body from the Abomination in a fashion similar to Banner's separation from the Hulk. In his case, however, Tyrannus's spirit would be in Blonsky's human body, leaving Blonsky behind as the Abomination, a slave to Tyrannus.

To complete this plan, the Tyrannus/Blonsky Abomination invaded Gamma Base and captured Bruce Banner, holding his wife Betty Ross Banner captive to ensure his aid. Tyrannus separated Blonsky and the Abomination, but Tyrannus's consciousness remained in the Abomination form, effectively curing Blonsky of his curse. The Tyrannus Abomination now attacked Banner, but Banner (as the Hulk) defeated him, damaging the machines capable of working the same wonder on himself in the process.

Blonsky is currently under arrest for his espionage activities and crimes as the Abomination. The Tyrannus Abomination recently escaped custody, battling (and losing to) Wonder Man in California. The effects of being trapped in the hideous form of the Abomination have seriously weakened Tyrannus's already unstable hold on reality.

ZZZAX™

F	IN (40)	Health: 230
A	AM (50)	
S	IN (40)	Karma: 62
E	UN (100)	
R	TY (6)	Resources: NA
I	TY (6)	
P	AM (50)	Popularity: −20

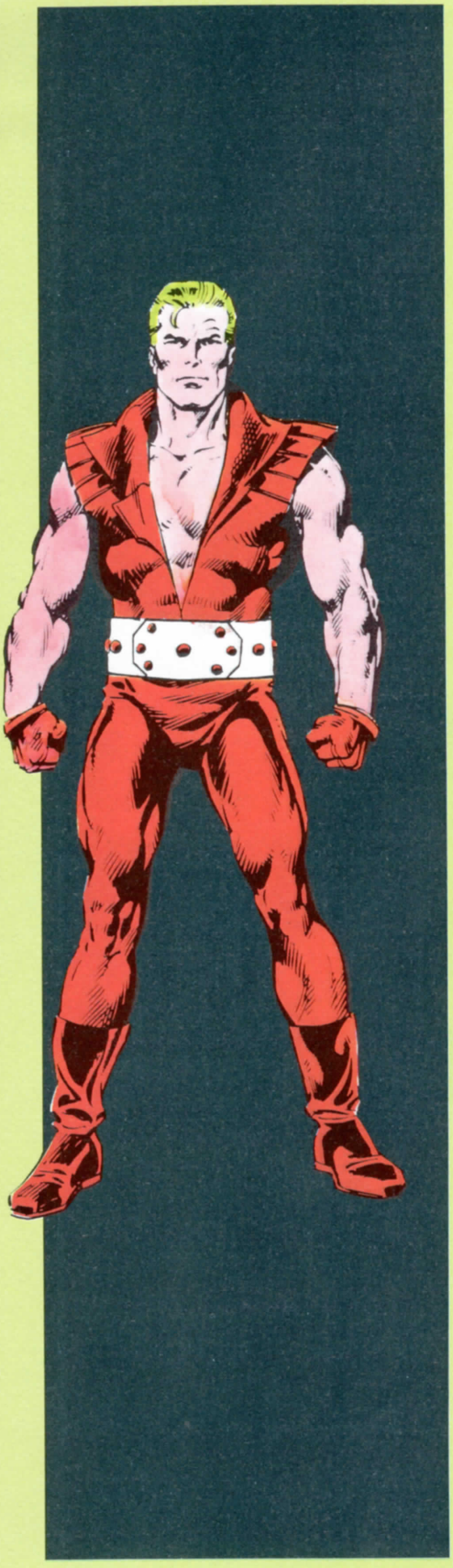
KNOWN POWERS:

Electric Body: Zzzax has no physical form; he is an intelligent electromagnetic construct of psionic energy. This provides him with several major advantages and disadvantages. Zzzax has Unearthly protection from physical and kinetic attacks, since such attacks pass through his electrically charged body. In addition, Zzzax can automatically make a successful energy attack on those touching his body, inflicting up to Unearthly damage. Various power stunts Zzzax has developed include:

* Flight at Amazing speed.
* The ability to possess the bodies of others through psionic means. Zzzax must hit the target and make two Psyche FEAT rolls against the intensity of the target's own Psyche. Success of the first FEAT indicates possession; the second FEAT means that Zzzax is in control of the body. While possessing the body, Zzzax is subject to normal attacks, though killing the host body merely allows Zzzax to go free. The host body must make an Endurance FEAT to avoid incineration.
* Fire bolts of Monstrous energy damage with a 15-area range.
* Use magnetic force of Monstrous intensity within a 15-area range.
* Travel through electrical lines at Unearthly speed.

Zzzax's electrical body has a number of limitations. He can be affected by other forms of energy and is particularly subject to being grounded by a great amount of water (a fire hose's spray will do). An Endurance FEAT allows Zzzax to avoid grounding. Zzzax also radiates his own energy away over time, at a loss of one Health point per turn. Overlong isolation causes Zzzax to "die away," so he often recharges from electrical sites as well as from the psionic energies of others. Individuals who have been possessed or incinerated by Zzzax "heal" Zzzax's losses by amounts equal to their Psyche scores.

ZZZAX'S STORY: The being known as Zzzax was created in a nuclear accident when a group of terrorists took over a Con Ed nuclear reactor. Stray gunfire in the reactor chamber caused a small chain reaction, which in turn formed the initial Zzzax creature. The creature absorbed the minds of the terrorists (incinerating them



in the process) and gained both a measure of intelligence and its evil disposition. It sees the destruction of thinking beings as a method of increasing its intelligence (perhaps by one point for every hundred points of intelligence so consumed of at least Typical level).

Zzzax's initial attacks were stopped by Hulk and the Avenger Hawkeye, who disrupted Zzzax's energy field by "grounding" Zzzax with a long, arrow-shot, conductive cable leading to the East River. Zzzax was re-formed some time later by an experiment to monitor past and present human brain-wave patterns: Soul Star Research. The creature reformed in the generator and again ran amuck, battling the Hulk until it was disrupted by being grounded in a thunderstorm.

A portion of Zzzax's power was left in the Soul Star Research device, however. When the generator was purchased by Stark International to equip Bruce Banner's Northwind research lab, the creature escaped once again. This time, Zzzax was defeated by an intelligent Hulk with Banner's personality and mind. The Banner Hulk drained Zzzax's power into a generator and shot the creature's energy into space.

Zzzax recently reappeared on Earth, working with a team of villains assembled by Graviton to defeat the West Coast Avengers. Zzzax was once again grounded and dispersed, but on this occasion was later captured by SHIELD and brought to Gamma Base for testing. Zzzax possessed the body of General "Thunderbolt" Ross but failed to exert complete control, so that Ross's personality overwhelmed Zzzax's own natural tendencies. The Zzzax/Ross being battled the Hulk and a gamma-irradiated Rick Jones, but fled when the Ross persona was made to understand that, as Zzzax, he was a monster, too.

Shortly thereafter, Ross's spirit returned to his original body, bringing with him some of Zzzax's electrical abilities. Ross used these abilities against another monster, a brain-controlling beast known as the Nevermind. The massive overload of electricity killed both the Nevermind and Ross as well.

Zzzax's current whereabouts and power levels are unknown. Further, former General Ross's body has disappeared, and *its* present location is unknown. Whether either of these foes of the Hulk will reappear is as yet unknown.

DOC SAMSON™

Dr. Leonard Samson

F	IN (40)	Health: 230
A	IN (40)	
S	AM (50)	Karma: 60
E	UN (100)	
R	EX (20)	Resources: GD (10)
I	EX (20)	
P	EX (20)	Popularity: 5

KNOWN POWERS:

Body Armor: Doc Samson's gamma-irradiated skin provides Incredible protection against physical and energy attacks. Unlike the Hulk and Abomination, he has no particular resistances to heat and cold.

Leaping: Doc Samson has Shift Z leaping power, such that he can leap 33 floors (500') straight up and four areas across.

TALENTS: Samson is a doctor of psychiatry and a self-educated expert on the Hulk and gamma radiation. After many tussles with the green-skinned monster and others, Samson has become a master of Martial Arts A, C, and E.

CONTACTS: Doc Samson is on shaky terms with most of his contacts. SHIELD regards him as a menace, the Hulkbusters regard him as a threat, and the University of Chicago has denied him tenure.

DOC SAMSON'S STORY: Doctor Leonard Samson first became involved with the Hulk when he proposed a cure for Betty Ross when she had been turned to a living crystalline being after a blood transfusion with another Hulk foe, the Sandman. Doc Samson invented a device to drain the psionic energy of the Hulk into a cathexis-ray device and used that device to cure both the Hulk and Betty.

The experiment worked, and Bruce Banner and Betty Ross were both restored to normal form. Samson then turned the ray on himself, out of scientific interest and a desire to become super-powered in his own right. The limited amount of gamma-irradiated psionic energy transformed Doc Samson into a green-haired super-hero. When Samson began romancing Betty away from the now-ordinary Banner, Dr. Banner subjected himself to gamma radiation again, once more becoming the Hulk.

Samson has made the Hulk and gamma radiation in general the centerpiece for his studies. With the Hulk's return from another dimension to this Earth, Samson discovered a method to "sift" the atoms of Banner from his Hulk persona, restoring Banner to normality. The Bannerless Hulk was then "acquired" by SHIELD, with the intention of destroying the monster. Samson thought the Hulk could be turned to good and so freed the creature — only to discover that without Banner's personality, the creature acted out of pure rage.

Feeling responsible for setting this murderous new Hulk free, Samson tried to recapture the monster. This obsession brought him into conflict with both of the Avengers teams and Banner's own Hulkbusters group. Both Banner and Hulk were restored as one being, and Samson's machinery was broken up in a clash between the Abomination and the Hulk. Samson worked with SHIELD in its attempts to recapture the Hulk, but with the complete destruction of Gamma Base (partially at his own hands), Doc Samson's present situation is uncertain. Ω

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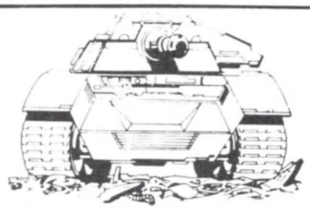

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CONVENTION CALENDAR

Convention Calendar Policies

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In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on 8½" × 11" paper. The contents of each listing should be short, succinct, and under 150 words in length.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following information, in the following order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements;
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, brochures, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements run the risk of not being considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. **No** call-in listings are accepted. Domestic and foreign conventions are welcome.

WARNING: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that up to a quarter of a million readers see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility!

Convention listings should be mailed by the copy deadline date to Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147. Copy deadline dates are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. For example, the copy deadline for the December 1987 issue is the last Monday of October 1987. Plan ahead; early listings pay off!

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, **please contact us immediately!** For any questions or changes related to this column, please call either Robin Jenkins or Roger E. Moore at (414) 248-3625.

☆ indicates an Alaskan convention.
❇ indicates a Canadian convention.
✪ indicates a European convention.

GATEWAY 7, September 4-7
The seventh running of this Labor Day convention will be held at the LAX Hyatt Hotel. Featured events include role-playing games, wargames, family games, and computer games tournaments. Other events include seminars, demonstrations, auctions, flea markets, and an exhibitors' area. Registration is $20 at the door. Write to: GATEWAY '87, c/o DTI, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808; or call: (213) 420-3675.

NANCON-88 IX, September 4-7
This annual, four-day gaming convention will be held at the Ramada North West Crossing in Houston, Texas. Tournament events include AD&D®, PARANOIA™, Squad Leader, Star Fleet Battles, and Nuclear War games, and a variety of others. A large dealers' room and open-gaming room are also provided. Send an SASE to: Nan's Game HQ, 2011 Southwest Freeway, Houston TX 77098 (Attn: NANCON).

THE NEXT REGENERATION, September 4-6
This *Doctor Who* convention, which is sponsored by Austin Meetings, will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 208 Barton Springs Road in Austin, Tex. Anthony Ainley, John Levene, and Jon Pertwee will be available for questions, photos, and autographs. Eric Hoffman will present a video history of the guests, along with a special tribute to Patrick Troughton. Other features include a costume contest, coloring contest, treasure hunt, dealers' room, and numerous other events. Registration fees are $25 for the weekend, $5 for Friday admission only, and $12 for Saturday or Sunday admission only. Tickets for the Saturday night Cabaret are $5. Write to: Austin Meetings, P.O. Box 5587, Austin TX 78763.

PACIFICON '87, September 4-7
The 11th annual PACIFICON gaming convention will be held at the Dunfey Hotel in San Mateo, Calif. Special room rates are available from the hotel for convention participants. Featured events include role-playing and boardgaming tournaments, a flea market, seminars, movies, miniatures-painting contests, auctions, miniatures gaming, open gaming, SCA demonstrations, and a dealers' room. Write to: PACIFICON, P.O. Box 2625, Fremont CA 94536.

WINGAMES VIII, September 4-7 ❇
This gaming convention will be held at the University Center on the University of Manitoba campus in Winnipeg, Man. Write to: WINGAMES VIII, P.O. Box 80, University Center, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Man., CANADA R3T 2N2.

GOLD CON '87, September 5-6
This gaming convention will be held at the OMNI Auditorium in Coconut Creek, Fla. Write to: GOLD CON '87, OMNI Auditorium, B.C.C. North, 1000 Coconut Creek Parkway, Coconut Creek FL 33066; or call: (305) 973-2249.

CHEY CON II, September 12
Also known as the "Rathha Con," this science-fiction convention will take place at the VFW Post 1881, 2816 E. 7th in Cheyenne, Wyo., and will run from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. Mark Armstrong, Editor of FANTAGRAPHICS, will be the guest of honor. Featured events include a costume party, Japanese animation, dealers' tables, and a screening of the "Star Trek Bloopers" film. At-the-door prices are $5 for adults and $3 for teenagers. Children under age 7 are admitted free when accompanied by a paying adult. Write to: CHEY CON II, 803 Taft Avenue, Cheyenne WY 82001.

MIRACLECON '87, September 12
This one-day gaming convention will be held from 9 A.M. to midnight at the Day's Inn in Springfield, Ohio. Sponsored events include an AD&D® tournament, a dealers' room, a miniatures-painting contest, a game auction, and a variety of other gaming programs. Registration is $5 for the day, with no additional fees for separate events. Write to: MIRACLECON '87, c/o Timothy A. Riley, 308 West Church Street, Urbana OH 43078; or call: (513) 653-7848.

MOD-CON 87, September 18-20 ✪
Italy's largest gaming event will be held at the Older Palasport, Viale Molza 21, in Modena, Italy. Events include AD&D® game tournaments, a Diplomacy tournament, a BATTLESYSTEM™ supplement demonstration, and other boardgaming and wargaming tournaments. Convention fees are £15, or £100 with hotel accommodations. Write to: Guido Tremazzi, c/o Orsa Maggiore Gaming Shop, Piazza Matteotti 20, Modena, Italy; or call: (011) 39-59-211200.

SPYCON 5, September 18-20
This special convention should be of interest to all fans of spy/undercover police TV shows. Held at the Mount Prospect Holiday Inn at 200 East Rand Road in Mount Prospect, Ill., SPYCON 5 features a dealers' room, art show, film room, and other events. Programs include episodes from *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, *The Avengers*, *Rat Patrol*, *The Professionals*, *Get Smart*, and a wide variety of others. Registration fees are $18 through Sept. 18, and $20 at the door. Send an SASE to: SPYCON 5, 2710 Rohlwing Road, Rolling Meadows IL 60008.

TOL-CON '87, September 26-27
This science-fiction, comics, and gaming convention will be held at the Student Center on the University of Toledo Scott Park Campus in Toledo, Ohio. Featured events include an auction, a painted miniatures contest, movies, an amateur film contest, an art show and contest, an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournament, and more than 100 other role-playing, board, and miniatures games. Merchants and exhibitors of comics, science-fiction items, and games will be in attendance, along with a number of guest speakers. Admission to all events is FREE. Send an SASE to: Student Activities Office, UT-BASH (TOL-CON), 2801 W. Bancroft Street, Toledo OH 43606; or call: (419) 537-4654.

UNICON I, September 26-27 ☆
The Anchorage Community College Gamers Association and the University of Alaska, Anchorage Gaming Society are proud to introduce UNICON I, which will be held on the University of Alaska, Anchorage/Anchorage Community College Campus. Tournaments include AD&D®, GAMMA WORLD®, Talisman, RISK®, Blood Bowl, and Advanced Squad Leader events, as well as a miniatures-painting contest, open gaming, and other activities. The convention is open from 9 A.M. to midnight on Saturday and from 9 A.M. to 8 P.M. on Sunday. Preregistration is $4 for UAA/ACC students and $5 for all others until September 12. Thereafter, registra-

tion is $8 for both days or $5 for one day. Send an SASE to: UAA Gaming Society, University of Alaska, Anchorage, 3211 Providence Drive, Anchorage AK 99508; or call: Greg Gibbs at (907) 786-7770.

VALLEY CON 12, September 26-27

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Ramada Inn, at the intersection of I-94 and Hwy. 75, in Moorhead, Minn. The guest of honor is Frederik Pohl. Featured activities include videos, an art show and auction, numerous panels, and a wide variety of gaming events (courtesy of the Gamers' Guild and Valley Con). Registration fees are $5.50 for adults, $4.50 for teenagers (ages 14-17), $3.00 for children (ages 4-13), and free for children under 4 years of age. Send an SASE to: VALLEY CON 12, P.O. Box 7202, Fargo ND 58108; or call: (701) 235-1322.

CONTRADICTION SEVEN, October 2-4

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Ramada Inn, 401 Buffalo Avenue, Niagara Falls, N.Y. Anne McCaffrey is the pro guest of honor, with Mike Glicksohn as fan guest. Other guests include Joan Vinge, Nancy Kress, Jim Frenkel, and T.S. Huff. Events offered include a costume contest ($25 for best costume), an art auction, videos, parties, a people and thing auction, panels, wargaming, filksinging, and other fannish activities. Registration is $16 until Sept. 12, and $20 thereafter. Write to: CONTRADICTION, P.O. Box 2043, Newmarket Station, Niagara Falls NY 14301. Please send an SASE if you require confirmation.

DRAGON CON '87, October 2-4

The Southeast Fantasy and Gaming Convention will be held at the Lanier Plaza and Convention Center in Atlanta, Ga. Fantasy role-playing, strategic, and computer gaming are featured in over 75 tournaments. Panels, video rooms, a dealers' room, a masquerade party, a game auction, and much more are offered. Guests include E. Gary Gygax, Michael Moorcock, Richard "Lord British" Garriott, Robert Asprin, Lynn Abbey, Brian Herbert, and Steve Jackson. Send an SASE to: DRAGON CON '87, Box 148, Clarkston GA 30021. Registrants can use Visa or MasterCard to charge advance memberships by calling: (800) 554-1162 (toll-free), or (404) 441-3045 in Georgia.

SAN ANTONIO FANTASY FAIR October 2-4

Sponsored by Bulldog Productions, this comic-book, science-fiction, and film supershow takes place at the Sheraton San Antonio, 1400 Austin Highway, Austin, Tex. Guests include Wendy and Richard Pini, Kerry Gammill, Tom Stazer, Mike Mignola, and many others. Other features include a huge dealers' room, a professional art show, an art contest, an art auction, video rooms, a masquerade, numerous workshops, previews of upcoming motion pictures, and a variety of gaming events and open gaming competition. Tickets for this three-day event are $15 through September 1 and $20 thereafter. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

SUNCOAST SKIRMISHES '87, October 2-4

LISTING CHANGE: SKIRMISHES presents the seventh annual production of this gaming extravaganza at the Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel in Tampa, Fla. Events include historical miniatures, role-playing, and boardgaming competitions. Live-action tournaments, a dealers' room, numerous seminars, and a host of other events are also sponsored. Preregistration for this three-day event is $12 until Sept. 1; thereafter, all registrations are $18. Hotel reservations may be made by calling: (813) 873-7900. Write to: SKIRMISHES, 1803 Third Court SE #A, Winterhaven FL 33880; or call: (813) 294-9166.

AUTUMN CAMPAIGNS '87, October 3-4

Historical miniatures, board games, fantasy, science-fiction, and role-playing games are featured at this gaming convention. The AUTUMN CAMPAIGNS '87 will be held at the Hilton Inn (same as last year) in Lexington, Ky. Registration is $10 for both days or $6 per day. There are no individual gaming fees. Write to: Convention Info, The Rusty Scabbard Hobby Shop, 188 Woodland Avenue, Lexington KY 40502.

FALL CON IV, October 3

This one-day gaming convention will be held at the McNaughton Park Pavilion in Elkhart, Ind., across from Elkhart General Hospital. Registration for this event is $5 at the door. In addition to an official RPGA™ Network AD&D® game event, FALL CON IV sponsors numerous other games and miniatures events. Write to: The Brigade Gaming Group, P.O. Box 252, Elkhart IN 46515.

MILWAUKEE'S NINTH HISTORICAL WARGAME WEEKEND, October 3-4

This ninth annual, nonprofit wargaming convention will take place at the Bucyrus-Erie Hall, 1120 Monroe Avenue, South Milwaukee, Wis. The convention opens at 10 A.M. on both Saturday and Sunday, and runs until 8 P.M. on Saturday and until 5 P.M. on Sunday. Featured events include a variety of military miniatures wargames and game vendors. Admission is $5 per day or $7 for both days; a $1 fee will also be assessed for each game played. Send an SASE to: Joe Gepfert, 3440 S. Monterey Drive, New Berlin WI 53151; or: Mark Van Groll, 4502 N. 56th Street, Milwaukee WI 53218.

TOLEDO GAMING CONVENTION V, October 3-4

This gaming convention will be held at the Toledo University Scott Park Campus in Toledo, Ohio. Featured events will include miniatures events, D&D® games, board gaming, a miniatures painting contest, computer-related events, movies, an auction, and a dealers' room. Send an SASE to: Mind Games, 3001 N. Reynolds Road, Toledo OH 43615.

VALLEYCON '87, October 3

Sponsored by Big Mike's Video, this one-day gaming convention will be held at the Tulare Veteran's Memorial Building in Tulare, Calif. Convention events include exhibits, guest speakers, rare movies, trivia contests, a costume contest, gaming demonstrations, AD&D® games, a dealers' room, and open gaming. Registration to this event is not required, since admission is FREE. Write to: VALLEYCON '87, 1766 East Tulare Avenue, Tulare CA 93274.

CON*STELLATION 6, October 9-11

This science-fiction and gaming convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Research Park in Huntsville, Ala. Julius Schwartz is the guest of honor. Registration is $11 through August 31 and $15 thereafter. Write to: CON*STELLATION 6, P.O. Box 4857, Huntsville AL 35815.

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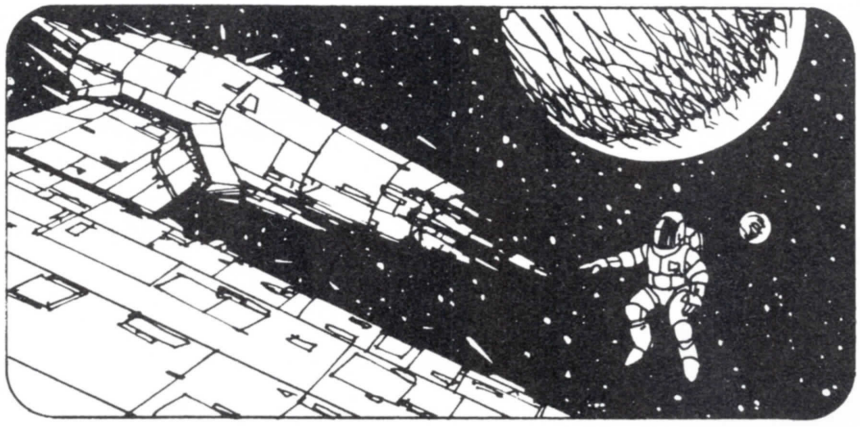

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CONTACT-5, October 16-18

Sponsored by the River City Science Fiction Association, this convention will be held at the Ramada Inn Spa in Evansville, Ind. The theme of the convention is "The War of the Worlds." Patrick Price, Editor of AMAZING® Stories, is the Guest of Honor. Other guests include Rickey Sheppard, Arlan Andrews, Timothy Zahn, Roger "R2" Reynolds, Mark Schulzinger, Gary M. Williams, Dr. Bill Breuer, Guy McLimore, Greg Poehlein, and David Tepool. Special events include an art show and auction, a masquerade, panel discussions, RPGA™ Network games, a 24-hour convention suite, a video room, and a hucksters' room. Registration fees are $12 until September 15, and $16 thereafter. Room rates at the Ramada Inn are $45 for a single, $50 for a double, and $56 for a suite. Write to: CONTACT-5, P.O. Box 3894, Evansville IN 47737.

FALL-CON '87, October 16-18

This gaming convention, sponsored by the Cincinnati Area Gamers, will be held at the Cincinnati Technical College in Cincinnati, Ohio. Role-playing games, boardgames, card games, and miniatures games are played at this event. Other features include a costume contest, a painting contest, a games auction, a dealers' room, and a *Titan* tournament. Write to: FALL-CON '87, P.O. Box 462, Cincinnati OH 45201-0462; or call: (513) 542-3449.

ICON XII, October 16-18

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Rodeway Inn, Hwy 965 and I-80, in Coralville, Iowa (call: (800) 228-2000 for reservations). Scheduled events include science-fiction readings and panels, an art show, a large dealers' room, and open gaming. Memberships are $12 until September 15 and $17 thereafter; special one-day registration is available at the door for $10. Guests include Glen Cook, Dick Spelman, Rusty Hevelin, Rob Chilson, Joe & Gay Haldeman, Margaret Weis, and Roger Moore. Write to: ICON XII, Dept. M, P.O. Box 525, Iowa City IA 52244-0525.

NECRONOMICON '87, October 16-18

The Stone Hill Science Fiction Association will hold its sixth annual science-fiction convention at the Holiday Inn-Sabal Park in Tampa, Fla. This year's guests of honor are Orson Scott Card, Frederik Pohl, and Elizabeth Anne Hull. In addition to panel discussions with these authors, there will be a vampire pageant, a costume contest, trivia games, a general auction, and a host of other events. Registration rates are $10 until September 15. Write to: NECRONOMICON, c/o Stone Hill SF Association, P.O. Box 2076, Riverview FL 33569; or call: (813) 677-6347.

RUDICON 3, October 16-18

This wargaming and role-playing convention takes place at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, N.Y. Events include tournaments, a dealers' room, movies, and much more. Write to: Steve Ritzau, RUDICON/Rochester Wargamer's Association and Guild (RWAG), c/o Student Directorate, One Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester NY 14623.

TITANCON I, October 16-18

Frustrated by room changes and *Titan* "variants" at Origins '87? TITANCON I presents the solution: the second annual *TITAN* NATIONAL TOURNAMENT (TNT) at the Days Inn in Charlottesville, Va. Teams of four or more players vie for the 1987 Team National Championship and trophy. Ranking is by Game Point Average (GPA); players will play four or more games of regular *Titan* over this two-day event. For those who complete four or more games, GPA is used to determine both Individual and Team National Champions. TITANCON I will arrange teams for individuals. Registration is $10 per person; this fee covers all gaming admission fees. Write to: TITANCON, P.O. Box 485, Ivy VA 24060.

OCTOBERFEST GAMING 1987
October 23-25

This role-playing game convention, which is sponsored by the Detroit Gaming Center and the City of Detroit Recreation Department, will be held at the Lighthouse Recreation Center in Detroit, Mich. Kevin Siembieda (creator of the ROBOTECH®, PALLADIUM®, MECHANOIDS®, and HEROES UNLIMITED® games), Erick Wujcik (designer of the TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES® and Revised RECON® games), and Pete Rogan (editor of *Stardate Magazine*) will be guests of honor. Tournaments include AD&D®, TRAVELLER®, PARANOIA™, and ROBOTECH® game events, along with role-playing games and seminars, and a role-playing game costume contest. Admission for this convention is FREE. Contact: Erick Wujcik, P.O. Box 1623, Detroit MI 48231; or call: (313) 833-3016.

NOVAG III, October 24-25

The Northern Virginia Adventure Gamers (NOVAG) will host their third annual Adventure Gaming Convention. This event will be held at the Leesburg Westpark Hotel in Leesburg, Va.

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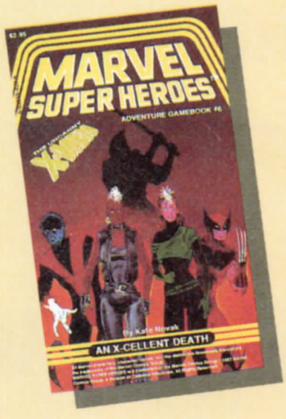

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RIVERBEND GAMING CONVENTION '87
October 31-November 1

Sponsored by the Riverbend Gamers, this two-day gaming event will be held at the Ramada Inn on Brady Street in Davenport, Iowa. Sponsored events will include an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournament, a miniatures painting contest, the Riverbend AD&D Game Open, dealers' tables, seminars, game demonstrations, and much more. Rick Reid of "Fluffy Quest" fame will be the guest of honor. Preregistration is $8 for both days; this includes one free event ticket. Write to: Riverbend Gamers Convention, 423 Brady Street, Davenport IA 52801; or call: (309) 323-2670.

CHICAGO MODEL & HOBBY SHOW
November 5-8

Sponsored by the Radio Control Hobby Trade Association (RCHTA), this third annual trade and hobby show will be held at the O'Hare Expo Center in Rosemont, Ill. A car track, boat pond, retail store, and static model area are featured again this year, with product displays by model railroad manufacturers. Over 2,000 retailers and distributors will attend this event, as will thousands of experienced modelers. Write to: CHICAGO MODEL & HOBBY SHOW, 2400 East Devon Ave., Suite 205, Des Plaines IL 60018; or call: Susan P. Lind at (312) 299-3131 or toll-free at (800) 323-5155.

SCI CON 9, November 6-8

Sponsored by the Hampton Roads Science Fiction Association, this science-fiction convention will be held at the Sheraton Beach Inn in Virginia Beach, Va. Larry Niven is the guest of honor, with P. Craig Russell as artist guest of honor and Bernadette Bosky as fan guest of honor. Featured events include panels, readings, videos, a costume contest, an art show, and much more. Registration costs are $15 until October 1, and $18 at the door. Hucksters' tables (limit of 2, and including one membership per table) are $50 each. Room rates at the Sheraton Beach Inn are $45 for a single and $51 for a double. Contact: SCI CON 9, P.O. Box 9434, Hampton VA 23670.

EARTHCON VII, November 13-15

This science-fiction convention, which is sponsored by NEOFSA, Inc., will be held at the Holiday Inn Westlake, 1100 Crocker Road, in Cleveland, Ohio. Guests of honor include R.M. Meluch, Jay Sullivan, Kenneth Shulze, Alan Tuskes, Sheldon Jaffrey, and Jim Young. Sponsored events include videos, dealers, a masquerade, panels, filksinging, an art show and auction, a media display room, and much more. Preregistration fees are $22. For more information, write to: Earthcon, P.O. Box 5641, Cleveland OH 44101.

DALLAS FANTASY FAIR, November 27-29

Sponsored by Bulldog Productions, this comic-book, science-fiction, and film supershow takes place at the Marriot Park Central, 7750 I-635 at Hwy 45, in Dallas, Tex. Guests include Carole Nelson Douglas, Steve Erwin, Kerry Gammill, and many others. Other features include a huge dealers' room, a professional art show, an art contest, an art auction, video rooms, a masquerade, numerous workshops, previews of upcoming motion pictures, and a variety of gaming events and open gaming competition. Tickets for this event are $20 through November 1 and $25 thereafter. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

PELI-CON '87, November 27-29

This convention will be the first comics and gaming convention sponsored in the New Orleans area. Held at the Clarion Hotel on historic Canal Street in Downtown New Orleans, PELI-CON '87 will take place just blocks away from the ever-popular French Quarter. Guest artists from several comic-book publishers will be present for panel discussions and autograph sessions. Other guests will include Ned Dameron, George Alec Effinger, Pat Adkins, David "Zeb" Cook, Mike Curtis, and Kirk Alyn. Game events featured include an AD&D® game tournament, an AD&D game trivia contest, Pente, BATTLESYSTEM™, and BATTLETECH® game competitions, and a variety of miniatures, board, and role-playing games. Other features include a film and video room, a dealers' room, and a 24-hour gaming room. Registration fees for the weekend are $12 until October 1. For more information on this event, contact: PELI-CON '87 Convention Committee, 5200 Conti Street, New Orleans LA 70124.

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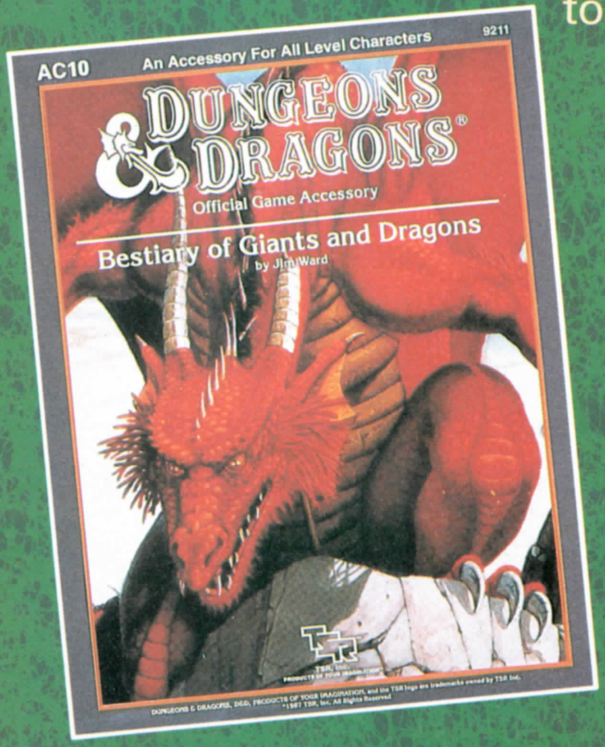

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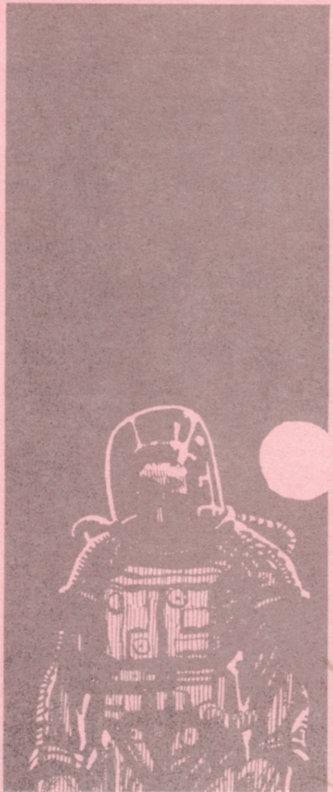

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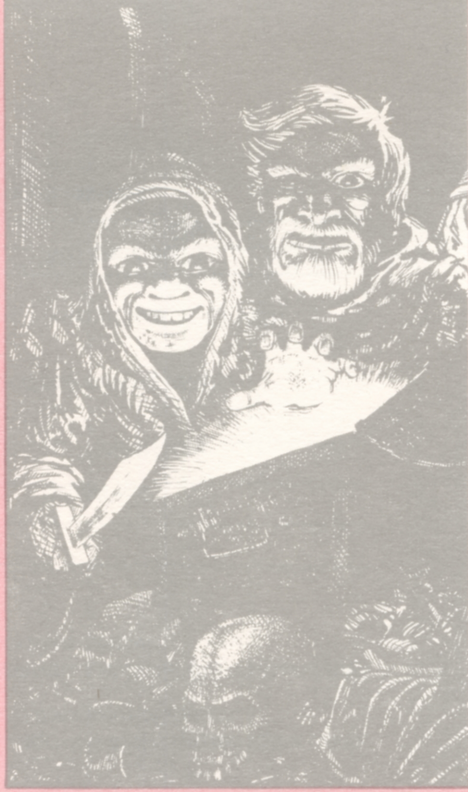

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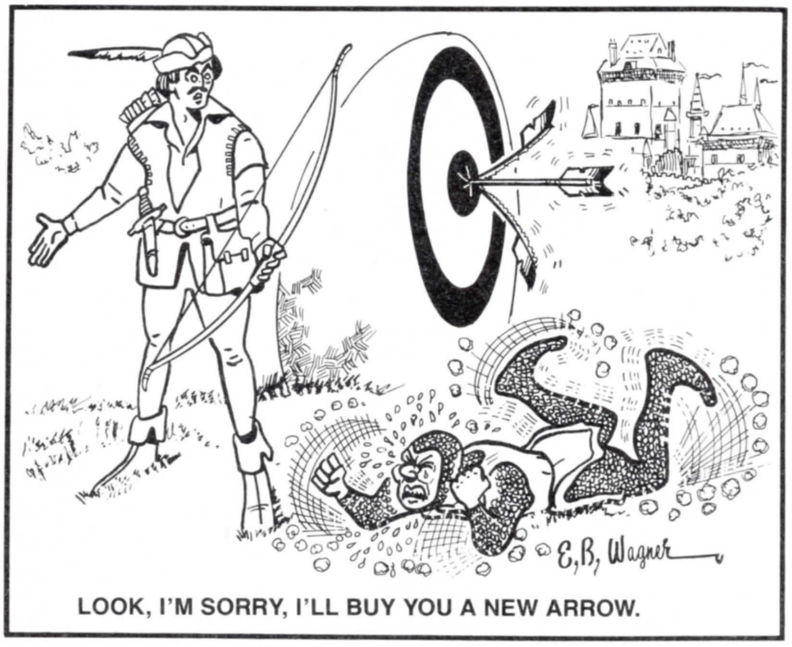
SNARFQUEST #44 BY ELMORE
WELL, HERE WE ARE. WELCOME TO NOKAN II.
AND THE CITY OF OF BLOODBURG.
© LARRY ELMORE '87
YOU KNOW, WE ARE NOT REALLY PREPARED FOR THIS, I MEAN...GEEZEL THINKS HE IS SUTHAZE, B.B. IS MAD 'CAUSE WE ATE HIS CHICKEN, I JUS' HOPE WE DON'T GET SHOT!
YOU'RE RIGHT, DA TRIP WAS JUS' TOO @#* LONG!
REMEMBER, WE ARE A ROCK 'N' ROLL BAND, LET'S GET A ROOM, GET A JOB AND FIND THAT GOLD!
WHAT ABOUT OUR OL' ZOOMER?
I CHAINED HIM DOWN.
AN' HE HAS PLENTY OF OL' CHICKEN BONES TO GNAW ON.
NICE SHIP YA GOT THERE.
THANKS, WHAT IS YOUR DOCKING FEE?
ONE HUNDRED A DAY OR TWO THOUSAND A MONTH.
TEL, GET OUT A BIG DIAMOND.
WOULD THIS COVER US FOR A MONTH OR SO?
BABY, THIS WILL DO FOR THREE MONTHS.
NOKAN II
SAY, COULD YOU TELL US WHERE WE COULD FIND CHEAP ROOM AND BOARD?
YEAH, GO DOWN THE STRIP ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE MARKET, THERE'S A PLACE CALLED MAD MARTHAS. DON'T LET HER SCARE YA, HER BARK IS WORSE THAN HER BITE. 'EY, ARE YOU GUYS SOME KIND OF MUSICIANS?
NOKAN
YEP, AN' WE ARE LOOKIN' FOR A JOB.
WELL, LAST SATURDAY NIGHT THERE WAS A BIG FIGHT DOWN AT THE GEEK-OUT CLUB. 'BOUT HALF THE BAND GOT BLOWN TO BITS. YA MIGHT GET A GIG AT GEEKS.
HEY, THANKS DUDE!
UNDERSTAND THIS, I AM A ROBOT AND I CAN'T SPEAK OUT FOR YOU GUYS. YOU WILL HAVE TO DO MOST ALL OF THE TALKING. SO FROM NOW ON, TRY TO USE THE NEW KNOWLEDGE I TAUGHT YOU.
OKAY.
LISTEN UP, YOU KNOT-HEADS, GEEZ, NO MORE PICKIN' ON ME OR I'LL BLOW YOU AWAY. B.B, YOU STRAIGHTEN UP AN' FORGET ABOUT DAT @#* OL' CHICKEN - WE ARE A TEAM!
OKAY.
M'NAME IS SUTHAZE.

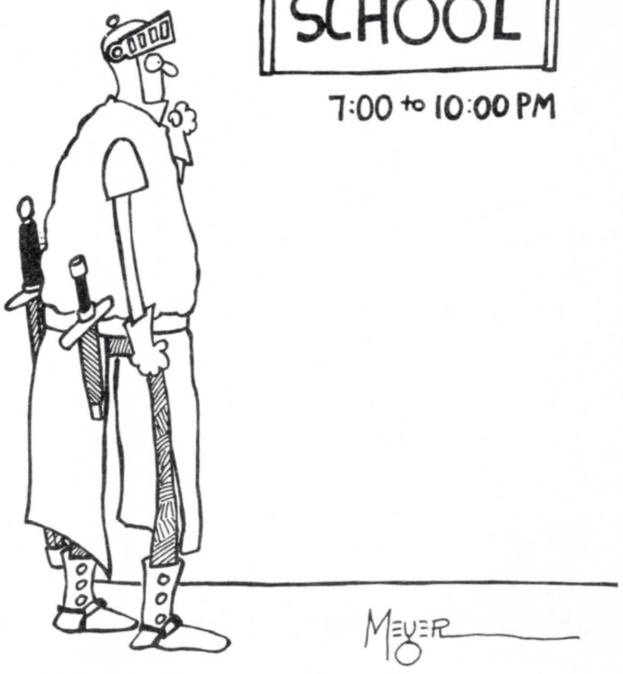
LATER, OUT ON THE STRIP...
HAPPY HOUR 5-8PM
CLYDE'S TATTOOS
I CAN'T BELIEVE DIS PLACE!
DIS IS TOOO MUCH!
WOW!
ARE WE IN HELL?
BENNY'S PAWN SHOP
GUNS
STOP GAWKIN'
GIRLS, GIRLS, GIRLS!
MINERS WELCOME
PUBS LOUNGE
WILD B CHILD'S B
BAD BI
FOXY BABE LOUNGE
MAD MARTHA'S MOTEL
THERE'S MAD MARTHA'S MOTEL... IT LOOKS CHEAP.
TELERIE, GET OUT A COUPLE OF SMALL GEMS OR SOMETHING. A ROOM IN THAT PLACE WILL BE CHEAP.
OKAY, I'LL DO THE TALKIN'.
AT MAD MARTHA'S
AN' WHAT THE @ZZ★ DO YOU BUNCH OF ZZ*@ SLUG WORMS WANT... A *★@ZZ ROOM?
TALKIN' 'BOUT ONE UGLY BI
WHAT DID YOU SAY, FREAK?
H-HE SAID THAT YOU HAVE ONE GOOD SALES PITCH...
HORMONE PROBLEMS
AND Y-YES WE DO WANT A LARGE ROOM.
I DON'T TAKE @*★ FROM ANY Z@★ ALIENS, AN' I DON'T LIKE ROBOTS EITHER.
1:00AM
NO KU
NO
NO
WOULD THIS TAKE CARE OF A LARGE ROOM FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS?
LET ME SCAN THIS THING... HUMMM... IT'S REAL... HUMM... OKAY, YOU GOT MY PENTHOUSE SUITE FOR TWO MONTHS.
MAKE IT THREE.
OKAY, @★ZM, OKAY, MAKE IT THREE!!
BEEEEP
WHEW, I'M TIRED!
IF DIS IS HER BEST ROOM DEN I'D HATE TO SEE A BAD ONE.
GAK! WHAT IS DIS?
WATCH IT! IT'S A NOKANROACH AND IT BITES!
STAND BACK, I'LL FRY IT!
BACK OUT ON THE STRIP...
EXCUSE ME S-SIR... COULD YOU TELL ME WHERE WE COULD FIND DA GEEK-OUT CLUB?
HEH-HEH...
FRDMPGMOX PV.
OKAY...?
I GOT THAT, HOW 'BOUT YOU B.B.? DID YOU UNDERSTAND THAT SILLY FREAK?

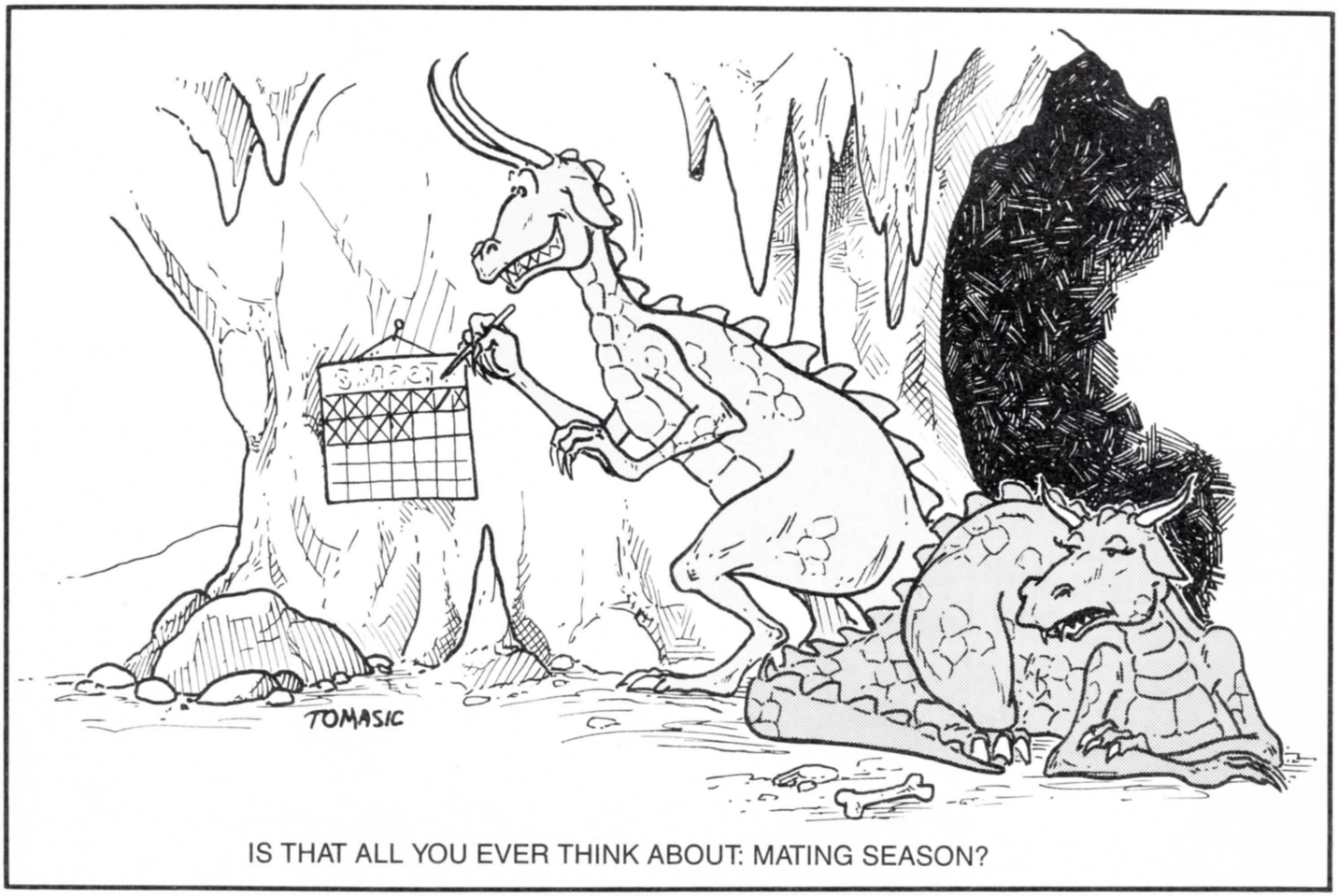
YOU BETTER WATCH IT... THAT FREAK COULD BEAT YOU TO MUSH IN ABOUT TWO SECONDS.
REALLY?
HERE IT IS... AND IT LOOKS ROUGH.
NO ROBOTS, SLUG OR SLIME TYPE BEINGS ALLOWED!!
LIVE BAND! DAAICING!
WE CAN'T GO IN, SO EFFIM AND I WILL GO LOOK FOR A TRUCK.
TELERIE, GIVE ME DA VIDEO CHIP TO SHOW 'EM.
LATER
'AN' HERE IS A VIDEO CHIP OF US PLAYIN' SOME OF OUR TUNES.
OKAY, HAVE A DRINK WHILE I RUN THIS BY IEKEY.
I WONDER WHO DIS IEKEY DUDE IS?
HE PROBABLY RUNS DA JOINT.
I HOPE HE LIKES OUR MUSIC.
THIS PLACE SEEMS PRETTY DEAD. DOES IT LIVIN' UP AT NIGHT?
YEP, AT NIGHT-(HIC)- THIS PLACE-(HIC)-IS JAMMED WIF MINERS AN' HAULER DRIVERS.
M'NOME IZ IEKEY. M' BEEZ ZE OWNER OF ZES CLUB... M'DEEGZ ZE TUNEZ. VOU GOTZ ZE SOB, AN' ZE ROBOTZ CAN WORK 'ERE ALZO.
JAYPEEZ USED AUTOS, SKIMMERS, HAULERS, & TRUCKS!!
HERE, TELERIE GAVE ME A LIL' BAG FULL OF BIG DIAMONDS.
GOOD, WE NEED TO BUY A TOUGH TRUCK, ONE THAT CAN GET US OUT TO THE MOUNTAINS SO WE CAN FIND THAT GOLD, AND HAUL IT BACK, WITHOUT RISKING OUR SHIP. WE MUST KEEP A LOW PROFILE, THUS AVOIDING CLAIM-JUMPERS.
HERE IS MY ONLY TRUCK WITH WHEELS. THIS BABY IS BUILT WITH THAT NEW SUPER TOUGH STEEL ALLOY, FROM TOP TO BOTTOM. THE BODY IS A REPLICA OF A 1956 FORD PICK-UP, A VERY POPULAR OLD EARTH DESIGN. BUT 'ERE'S THE KICKER. IT HAS A 428 SUPER-CHARGED GASOLINE ENGINE.
ISN'T THAT AN ILLEGAL ENGINE? WHERE WOULD I GET GASOLINE?
TODAY'S SPECIAL
TOO BAD YOUR SKIMMER-HAULERS ARE SO EXPENSIVE.
HEY BABE, GASOLINE ENGINES ARE NOT ILLEGAL ON NOKANII. BESIDES, NOBODY ON OTHER PLANETS WOULD KNOW A GAS ENGINE IF IT BIT 'EM ON THE..
IS IT POWERFUL?
I DON'T KNOW. THE OLD DUDE THAT BUILT IT WANTED TO TRADE IT IN 'CAUSE HE SAID IT SCARED HIM.
NOBODY HERE HAS REALLY DRIVEN IT, BUT IT SURE IS LOUD WHEN YA FIRE IT UP.. TELL YA WHAT, FOR A LIL' EXTRA, I WILL INSTALL A CHEMICAL CONVERTER BOX SO THAT YOU CAN CONVERT GARBAGE INTO A HIGH-OCTANE LIQUID FUEL.
WELL, THE NOISE WILL NOT SCARE US... LET'S NEGOCIATE.
NEXT ISSUE: BIG TROUBLE ON FOUR WHEELS.

DRAGONMIRTH

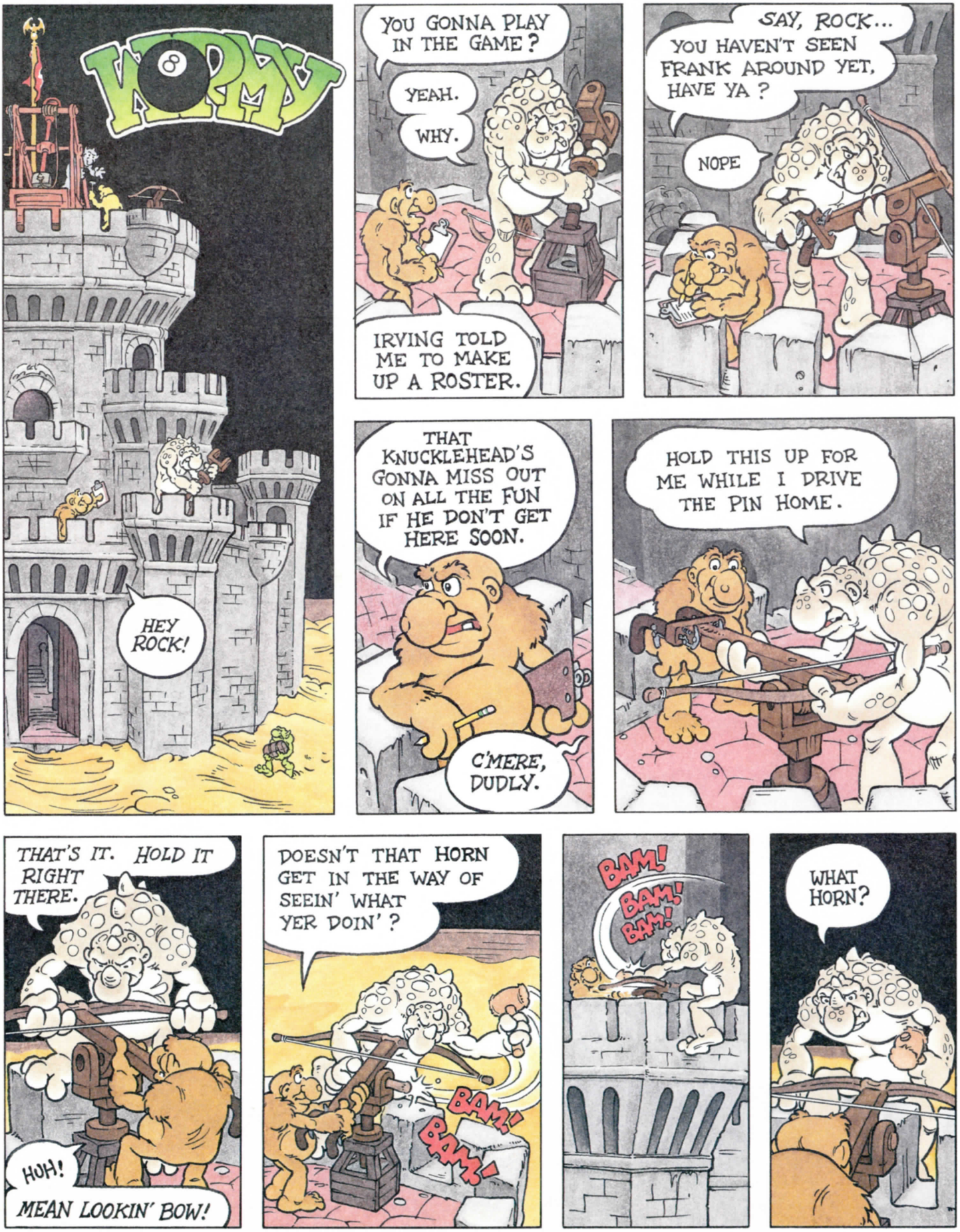


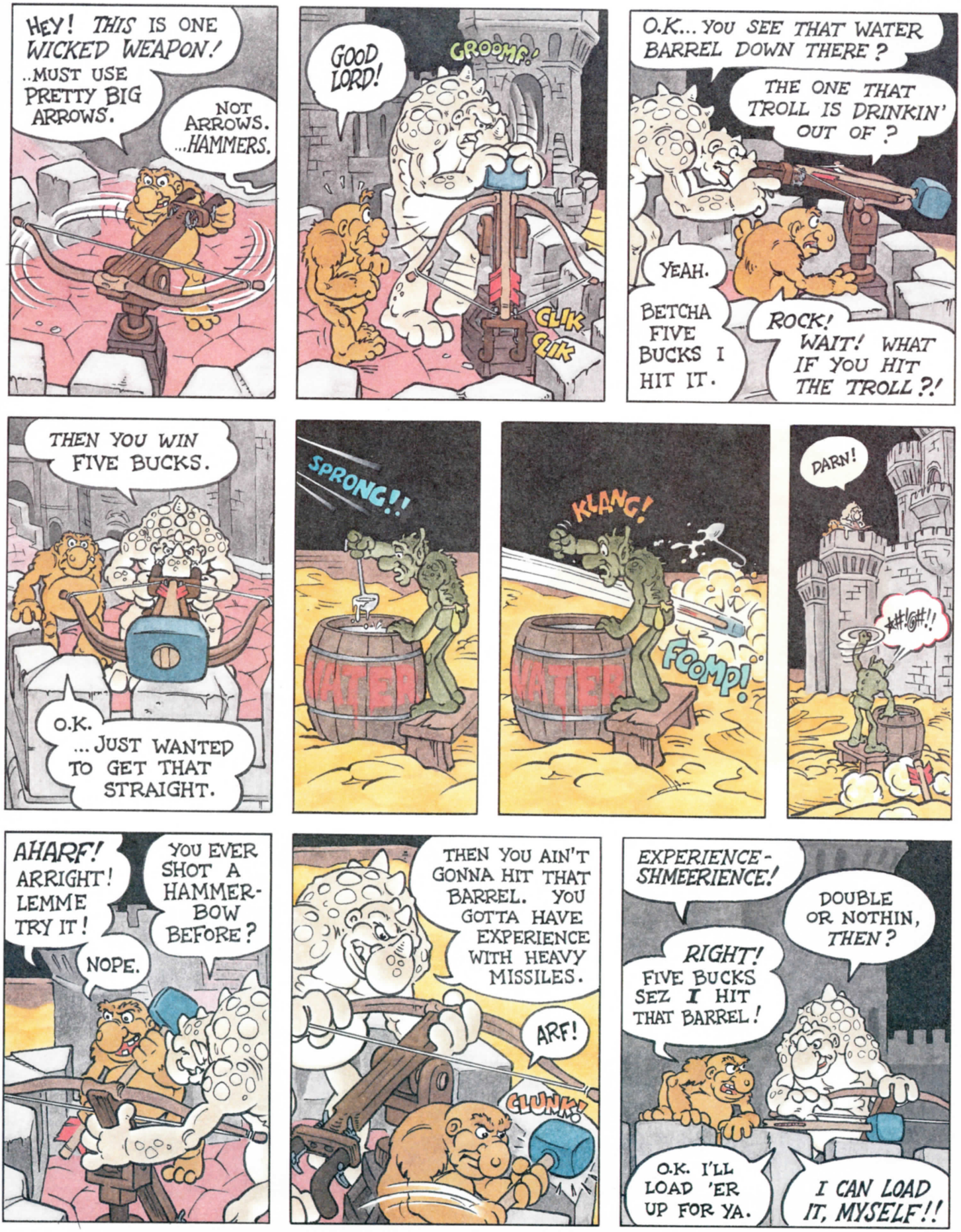
LOOK, I'M SORRY, I'LL BUY YOU A NEW ARROW.





IS THAT ALL YOU EVER THINK ABOUT: MATING SEASON?


WORMY
HEY ROCK!
YOU GONNA PLAY IN THE GAME?
YEAH.
WHY.
IRVING TOLD ME TO MAKE UP A ROSTER.
SAY, ROCK... YOU HAVEN'T SEEN FRANK AROUND YET, HAVE YA?
NOPE
THAT KNUCKLEHEAD'S GONNA MISS OUT ON ALL THE FUN IF HE DON'T GET HERE SOON.
C'MERE, DUDLY.
HOLD THIS UP FOR ME WHILE I DRIVE THE PIN HOME.
THAT'S IT. HOLD IT RIGHT THERE.
HUH! MEAN LOOKIN' BOW!
DOESN'T THAT HORN GET IN THE WAY OF SEEIN' WHAT YER DOIN'?
BAM! BAM!
BAM! BAM! BAM!
WHAT HORN?


HEY! THIS IS ONE WICKED WEAPON!
..MUST USE PRETTY BIG ARROWS.
NOT ARROWS. ...HAMMERS.
GOOD LORD!
GROOMF!
CLIK CLIK
O.K... YOU SEE THAT WATER BARREL DOWN THERE?
THE ONE THAT TROLL IS DRINKIN' OUT OF?
YEAH.
BETCHA FIVE BUCKS I HIT IT.
ROCK! WAIT! WHAT IF YOU HIT THE TROLL?!
THEN YOU WIN FIVE BUCKS.
O.K. ...JUST WANTED TO GET THAT STRAIGHT.
SPRONG!!
KLANG!
FOOMP!
DARN!
AHARF! ARRIGHT! LEMME TRY IT!
NOPE.
YOU EVER SHOT A HAMMER-BOW BEFORE?
THEN YOU AIN'T GONNA HIT THAT BARREL. YOU GOTTA HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH HEAVY MISSILES.
ARF!
CLUNK!
EXPERIENCE-SHMEERIENCE!
DOUBLE OR NOTHIN, THEN?
RIGHT! FIVE BUCKS SEZ I HIT THAT BARREL!
O.K. I'LL LOAD 'ER UP FOR YA.
I CAN LOAD IT, MYSELF!!

RRRR
GRUNK!
RNF!
MF!
GARDARNDAGNAGGIN FRAGGIN BRAGGIN MARF! ARF!
ARRRRRRR!
SHOOHOO HOOH... THERE YA GO.
:URF:
SZIK CLIK
I DIDN'T NEED YER HELP!
HNF! JUST HIT THE BARREL, DUDLY.
SPRONG!
AAAAAAAH...
KABLAMMSH!
I'LL BE DARNED!
THAT LUCKY SUCKER REALLY DID HIT IT!
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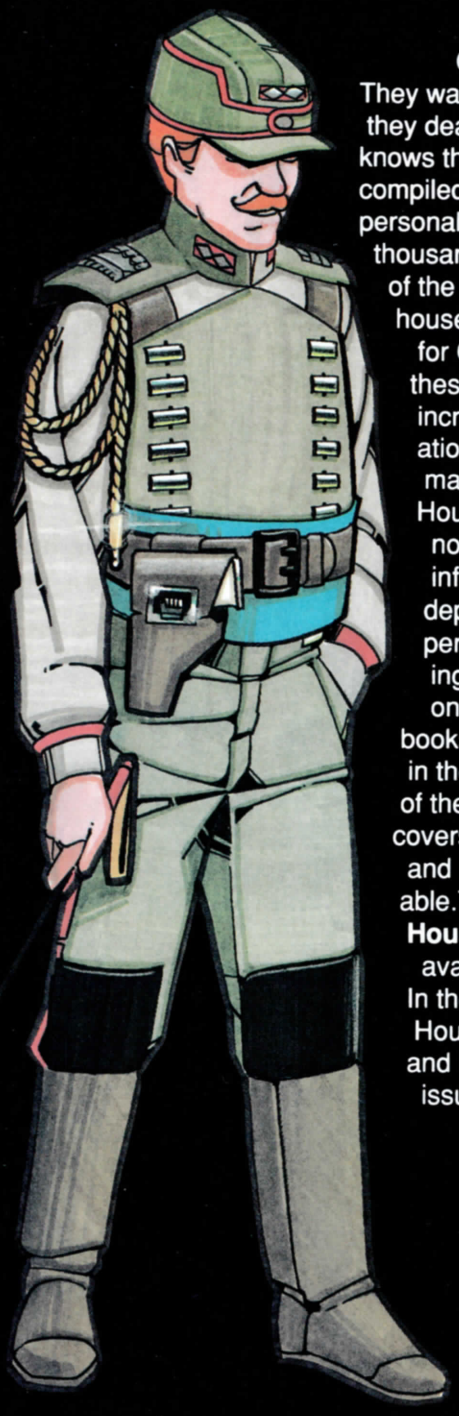
THE FACTS
ABOUT THE SUCCESSOR STATES



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Colonel Steven Zaks, commander of the 12th Donegal Guards, is shown wearing the typical senior officer field uniform. Campaign bars adorn the front of flack jacket. Colonel Zaks' blue sash shows that he is graduated from the prestigious Nagelring Academy on Tharkad. As, so few officers carry a riding crop, it indicates that this colonel is either young, vain, or both - a potentially disastrous combination.

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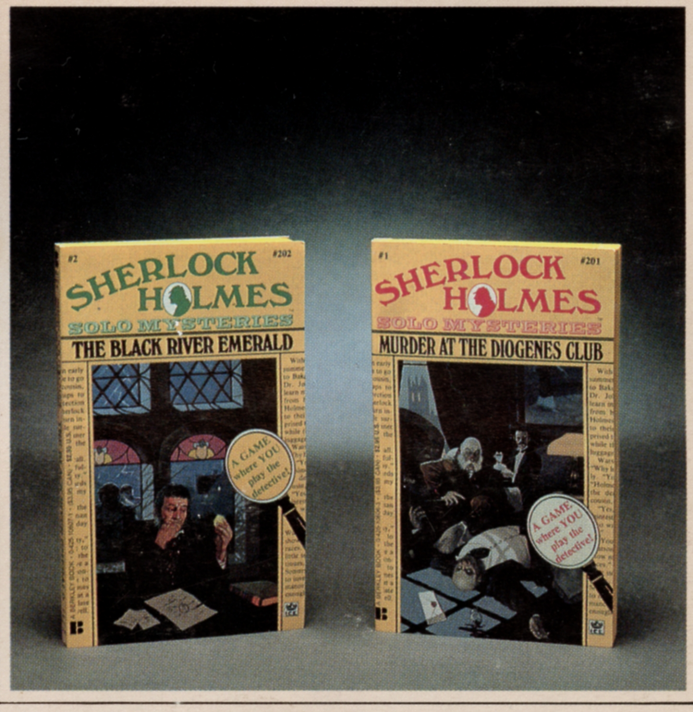

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